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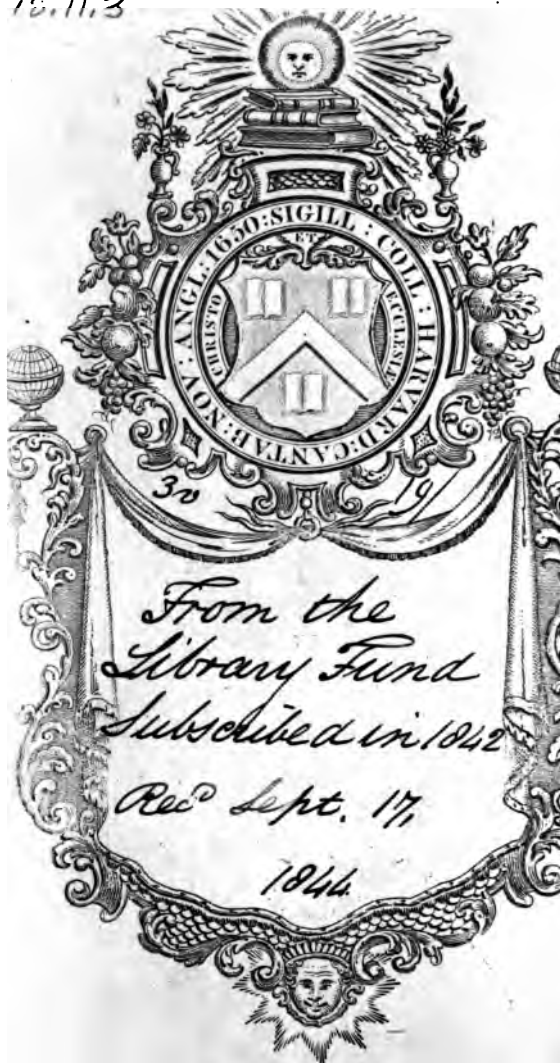
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J. L. de Harmer

LETTERS ON PARAGUAY:

COMPRISING

AN ACCOUNT OF A FOUR YEARS' RESIDENCE IN  
THAT REPUBLIC,

UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF

THE DICTATOR FRANCIA.

---

*John Parish, and William Parish*  
J. P. AND W. P. ROBERTSON.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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TO HIS GRACE

THE .

DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH AND QUEENSBERRY, K.G.,

&c.

&c.

&c.

THESE VOLUMES ARE, WITH HIS PERMISSION,

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

BY HIS GRACE'S MOST OBEDIENT AND OBLIGED

HUMBLE SERVANTS,

THE AUTHORS.



## P R E F A C E.

---

It is known, we suppose, to all readers, that the preface of a book, although it comes first, is written last.

It happens, however, in the present case, that the preface has not only been the part of our book last written, but that the greater portion of it has contrived to creep into the concluding pages of the second volume.

We must accordingly beg of our readers that they will here be pleased to turn to the last letter of this work, addressed to themselves, as some portion of that letter may be properly read as part of our preface.

We have marked the first five letters of our series as "Introductory." They contain a rapid

sketch of the political and social elements out of which the South American republics have been framed.

We have constantly been asked why South America continues so long in an unsettled state ? and the sketch alluded to is our answer to the query. We have endeavoured to make the introductory matter as light as the nature of the subject would permit : but, lest some of our readers should be disinclined to peruse political sketches of any kind, we beg to state that we finish ours at the *eighty-eighth* page.

Paraguay is less known, perhaps, to the English reader than any other part of the world into which European civilization has been introduced. We believe we were the first British subjects who ever visited the country \*; and no other work than the present, professing to give an account of Paraguay, written by an Englishman, is extant.

We think that the history of the Jesuits in

\* We must except our friend, the Scotch serjeant, mentioned in Letter XXI.

Paraguay will be found to contain many curious details; and to exhibit to those who are not deeply read in Jesuitical lore, a very singular state of society.

We have expressed, in the body of the book, our obligations to Sir Woodbine Parish for the kind manner in which he has given us access to his valuable collection of books and original and unpublished MSS. relative to South America at large. Those which treat of the expulsion of the Jesuits are interesting, rare, and authentic; and we have found them of great use in giving an account of that celebrated measure.

We desire also to make our acknowledgments to Mr. Arrowsmith for the great pains he has taken in forming the small map which accompanies our work. We think the different places are given, and the courses of the rivers Paraguay, Paraná, and La Plata, are exhibited more correctly than in any other map which we have seen.

To our subscribers in general, and to several

individuals among them in particular, we are much indebted for the encouragement which they have given to this slight work. We wish our ability were commensurate with our desire to show that their patronage has not been misplaced.

---

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# LETTERS ON PARAGUAY.

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## LETTER I.

To J—— G——, Esq.

### INTRODUCTORY.

General Remarks—Revolt of Spanish America—Colonial Policy of Spain—Accounts from South America—Lord Viscount Beresford—Origin of Enthusiasm about the Country—Reaction.

*London, 1838.*

THE numerous works on South America which, within the last few years, have issued from the press; the various histories, journals, travels, and residencies already before the public, have so attenuated the whole subject, that in writing anything more on it, we are certainly bound to consider whether we can offer anything new, on topics now so familiar to almost every class of readers.

We have endeavoured to consider this point; and when we reflect that the letters which follow, though now edited anew, were substantially

written at the periods to which they refer, and from actual observation of the facts which they record; if we can add, that they form only a part of the many documents collected, and of letters written, during a residence of nearly twenty-five years in Buenos Ayres, Paraguay, Chile, and Peru; and if we consider finally, that an intercourse with those countries has been kept up by us since we left them; we think it will not be strange if our communications contain something relative to South America, that has escaped the notice of hurried journalists, casual visitants, and galloping travellers.

When we recollect, also, that some of our early years were spent in Paraguay, a sort of *terra incognita*; that we there had long and familiar intercourse with one of the most singular characters, and systematic despots of his day and generation; that we have explored the far distant abodes of the Jesuits, and far-famed ruins of their polity, institutions, and industry; we think we *may* offer something new, even on the well-known subject of South America.

Although we shall naturally be led into details of the habits and manners of the South Ame-

ricans, we shall not confine ourselves to these topics, so generally treated of by other travellers.

In tracing, from its initiation, the revolution of South America, we would seize the more striking events of its history ; and exhibit to you, in connexion with these, the leading men of their day, with almost every one of whom we have held much intercourse, and carried forward many important transactions. For the present, after a short notice of some preliminary matter, necessary for the unravelling of the clue of our whole story, we intend to confine ourselves pretty much to Paraguay and Doctor Francia.

The history of the Revolution of Spanish America is unfortunately the history rather of civil discord, and party intrigue,—of the military aggression of one petty chief against another,—than of any protracted struggle for independence against the common enemy. There has as yet been little exhibition of any patient, respectable, or tolerably successful effort to supersede, by a better order of things, either the laws or the practice which, soon after the conquest of her part of the New World, the mother country introduced.

Some of the colonies burst the bonds of Spanish oppression much sooner than others. Paraguay, for instance, has had no Spanish enemy to contend with since 1811, nor Buenos Ayres since 1814. Chile continued to be more or less harassed by expeditions from Lima till 1819: and Peru cannot be said to have been wholly emancipated from the thralldom of Spain till the surrender, by General Rodil, of the fortress of Callao in 1826.

In Colombia, the struggle for independence was more protracted; in Mexico, with the exception of Mina's transient efforts, it was later begun than in any of the other viceroyalties: but of all it may be safely affirmed, that their domestic and family quarrels and disturbances, which continue up to this hour, have been much more ruinous to them than either invasions from without, or conspiracies of the old Spaniards from within.

That this is the fact must be obvious to every one, who has even so far interested himself in the progress of the Revolution, as to read the details of it furnished, from time to time, by the English newspapers.

To those who have witnessed that progress,

not only has the fact been evident, but it has supplied its own solution.

Had the Spanish power been greater in those countries than it was, there would necessarily have been greater concentration of effort to overthrow it. There would have been thus less opportunity for the native chiefs to plan, and carry forward schemes of personal aggrandizement. They must have been engaged in the more arduous and pressing struggle which the expulsion of the common enemy would have demanded, before they could have begun to fight for civil and military pre-eminence among themselves. In the mean time, the urgent danger, and the unity of effort required to avert it, would have engendered more of public spirit among the natives. so that when the Spaniards should at length have been driven from all their strong holds, it would have been by a common effort to which every citizen, as well as soldier, would have felt he had contributed something. He would have been less willing, therefore, passively to surrender into the hands of any military despot, or petty chief in command of five hundred recruits, that liberty, for the attainment of which he had him-

self fought, or in some other way directly suffered.

Instead of this, however, it frequently happened that the Spanish troops came over in bodies to the chiefs of known revolutionary principles. When this was not the case, those chiefs organized a few corps of foot soldiers, and with these, and a squadron of cavalry, in a first or second encounter, discomfited their adversaries the Spaniards. Battles, in which not more than a thousand men have been engaged, have decided the fate of entire provinces. Some of the campaigns undertaken, and of the most famous victories achieved, if stripped of the high sounding phraseology, and pompous terms so abundant in Spanish diction, with which the report of such victories has been adorned, would all go to confirm this fact—that the military power of Spain in South America, at the commencement, and during the whole progress of the Revolution, has been not a little exaggerated. The efforts made by the Americans to accomplish their independence, wherever they were put forward with energy, were invariably successful; and we are to attribute in a great measure to

the facility with which the numerous but often isolated bodies of Spanish troops throughout the country were first overcome, that spirit of military encroachment in the South American chiefs, who, at so easy a cost as that of a skirmish or a battle, paved their way to power over their inexperienced and divided countrymen. The exercise of this power has been often as injurious and oppressive as that of any dominion ever asserted or exercised by Spain herself.

But though this is one cause of the slow progress made by the South Americans towards anything like stability in their political institutions, and of the comparatively little benefit hitherto derived by them from their Revolution, yet it must be confessed that there is another cause, which lies deeper, and operates much more perniciously than the one already assigned; and to this second cause we are unwillingly constrained to trace, not only many of their miscarriages in political matters, but, what is still more to be lamented, many of their aberrations in those of principle. This cause is to be found not only in the gross ignorance in which it was ever the policy of Spain to educate her colonial

subjects, but in the idle and vicious courses in which, if they were not openly encouraged, the better classes of Creole youth were certainly never greatly checked by their European parents.

With those who consider, indeed, what was the policy of Old Spain with her colonies,—how great her jealousy lest they should outgrow her means of control,—how vigilant the system of political espionage with which she watched them,—how sordid, low, and limited was the education she permitted them,—and how pernicious were at once the example and control of a great proportion of the friars with which every part of her territory teemed;—the wonder is not that the present inhabitants should still exhibit so many traits of the vicious system entailed on them by Spain, but that Europeans should have calculated so credulously on their possessing those public principles and virtues which were wholly incompatible with their course of colonial training.

This wonder will be less, however, if we shortly reflect on the manner in which information, in regard to the state of South America, was transmitted to Europe; on the intercourse, political as well as mercantile, which grew out of this



information; and on the new state of things hence arising in the ci-devant colonies.

First, Sir Home Popham transmitted to England the most animated picture that could well be drawn of the wealth and fertility of the country in which the gallant General (now Viscount) Beresford, under circumstances calculated of themselves to excite at once astonishment and admiration, had obtained a footing. The capture of Buenos Ayres seemed an event which ought more properly to be ranked with the daring exploits of the age of chivalry, than with the military undertakings of these days. With a handful of fifteen hundred men, General Beresford landed in a totally unknown country, and proceeded to assault a town covering many square miles, and containing seventy thousand civilized inhabitants. The Viceroy, Sobremonte, presided over the troops; European generals commanded them; and the hatred of both Spaniards and Creoles towards the English was heightened by religious rancour. Yet, under these circumstances, General Beresford took Buenos Ayres. He not only took it, but, more wonderful still, he constrained his enemies to lay aside their dislike and distrust of

him and of his nation, and to give him in lieu their friendship and esteem. The rare combination which General Beresford exhibited of discipline, watchfulness, and circumspection, with the popular manners and frank deportment of the soldier and the gentleman, spell-bound the Buenos Ayrians, and enabled him to keep his conquest for months. Neither did he surrender it till, overpowered by irresistibly superior numbers, his honourable capitulation only added fresh laurels to those he had already reaped from the striking achievement of his previous victory.

Had a Beresford, instead of a Whitelock, commanded our forces at a subsequent period, in what a curiously different channel would not the historical events of the River Plate have run. What room for speculative induction does not the thought open up to the statesman and philosopher.

From 1809 till 1822-3, South America was open, in most parts, to our commerce; and the information received during that period, being chiefly from mercantile men, many of whom had been successful, was highly coloured. It not only left, but encouraged parties here to generalize

this partial success to any extent they pleased. Hence arose an inference of a certain universality of wealth; and a prospect dawned upon the minds of men of an almost unlimited sphere for the commercial enterprise of Great Britain.

But it is to Mr. Canning's foreign policy, as connected directly with Spain and Portugal, and *through* them, with "Spain and the Indies," that the great bewilderment of this country (for it can be called nothing short of that), in regard to South America, is to be attributed.

That ardent statesman already determined on the vast project of calling (to use his own words in Parliament) "A NEW WORLD INTO EXISTENCE," sent out diplomatic agents to all parts, to report on the general circumstances of that new world.

With the highest deference and respect for those gentlemen, be it yet permitted to state, that tintured (and how should it have been otherwise?) with the Foreign Secretary's enthusiasm on so alluring a subject, they went forth disposed to report *favourably*. It was required also that they should report *quickly*. The growing importance of events in the south of Europe

demanded this. The result was, that the diplomats, on arrival at the various ports of South America, naturally threw themselves on the best-informed merchants for information. But, beside that it was the interest of those merchants to magnify the commercial importance of the country, the very fact of Mr. Canning's sending out consuls-general to make treaties of alliance with the new Republics, fanned in this country the ardent expectations of men already sufficiently sanguine. The consequence was, that the reports, although more or less tinged with the glow, as well of the great minister who had originated these measures, as of his diplomatic agents, and of the merchants by whose assistance the documents were framed, were extremely well received at home. The full recognition by England of many of the Republics followed; and Mr. Canning, coming down to Parliament, triumphantly met the fears of those who dreaded a continental war, in consequence of the embroiled state of France and Spain, by an eloquent speech, in which, if we recollect well, there was a passage to the effect that it was long since Spain had ceased to be formidable *in herself*: that it was

Spain *with the Indies* that had been the formidable power; that the Indies were now lost to her; and that, by the recognition of Republics which had *de facto* achieved their independence, we had counteracted all preponderating influence on the part of the absolute governments of Europe—we had “*called into existence a new world.*”

This was in the year 1823-4. The lamentable, not to say ruinous results of the confidence thus established, and of the hopes thus excited, are too fresh in the memory of the thousands who have suffered by their connexion with Spanish America. Loans were furnished to every one of the independent governments; millions were shipped to enable them to work their mines; emigration sent forth her labourers to people the wastes of the new world; manufactures were shipped far beyond the amount required for the consumption of the country; and we were ere long taught, by a sad experience, that the whole fabric of these vast undertakings was reared on a foundation inadequate to support so great a superstructure. In 1825 it began to totter; and in 1826-7 it came down with a crash which laid many prostrate under its ruins, and more or

less injured every individual connected with the country.

Nor was this, though the consequence most to be lamented, by any means the *only* consequence of our overweening confidence in the infant governments.

Nurtured by these very acts into a feeling of importance beyond that to which they were naturally entitled, they have been led too often into a belief that latent views of commercial or more sordid aggrandizement lay hidden under the outward show of a liberal and confiding policy ; and they have thus not only held as less sacred than they ought to have done the obligations they have contracted ; but they have adopted, in many cases, a narrow and fluctuating course of legislation, too much akin to that of Old Spain. Their injudicious and ill-timed laws have often hampered commerce, and retarded the progress of the public welfare of every section of Spanish America.

Yours, faithfully,

THE AUTHORS.

## LETTER II.

To J—— G——, Esq.

## INTRODUCTORY.

**Was the Declaration of Independence premature?—Solution of the  
Query—State of Old Spain—Government of the Colonies—  
Military Force of Spain in South America.**

*London, 1838.*

It may be asked, and, after what we have said in our last letter, it naturally *will* be asked, were the declarations of independence, then, made by the late Spanish provinces, premature?

In reply to this question, it may be stated, that if by “premature” be meant *premature in respect of their moral and political capacity to govern their vast country on sound principles of political economy*, their declarations of independence certainly appear to involve this charge: for it is matter of notoriety, that they are, after more than twenty-five years of revolution, very little advanced in the science of government, and nearly as far removed now as they ever were from political stability.

But if by "premature" be meant only premature in respect of their *physical capacity to maintain the independence which they at first achieved*, then it is certain that their revolution was *not* premature; for they have preserved free from all external control, the country they wrested from the hands of Old Spain, till the latter is now reluctantly forced upon a consideration of the expediency of recognising the independence of her late colonies, and no longer dreams of ever repossessing herself of them.

Can it be alleged that upon the whole, then, they have been losers, rather than gainers by their Revolution? We think quite the reverse.

For one ship that entered their deserted ports, under the colonial restrictions, twenty now sail into them from all quarters of the globe. For one newspaper then published, there are now in circulation four or five. Books of every kind are imported. Foreigners freely take up their abode in the country. Better houses, better furniture, are seen everywhere. The natives, guided by the example of foreigners, live not only better than before, but have acquired habits of greatly-increased domestic comfort and convenience. In



two or three of the republics, the Protestant religion is tolerated. The undue influence of the priests, if not entirely undermined, is in many places greatly diminished, and in some nearly overthrown. The authority of the pope is not only practically disavowed, but a legate, sent some time ago from Rome to Chile, met with a very cold reception, and with an order for his instantaneous return to that Italy from whence he came. In these, and in many other respects, the Americans have gained by their Revolution. They have gained, too, as a consequence of it, in their trade, and pecuniary transactions with England : for, to say nothing of the large sums received by them in loans, for working of mines, &c., for which little or nothing has been as yet returned ; we very much question whether the merchandise sent to South America has, on the whole, produced to the shippers of it from this country, an adequate profit ; while it is incontestable that a greatly-increased export trade, at much enhanced prices, has augmented in all parts of Spanish America the capital and means of its inhabitants.

What may, however, be truly said of the South

Americans is, that they have not only failed to derive the benefit to have been expected from their Revolution, under rectitude and prudence of conduct, but that they have obstructed such benefit by protracted civil commotions on the one hand, and by a want of capacity, and sometimes, unfortunately, of integrity, in the public administration of their affairs, on the other.

Hence a check to the influx of foreign population, and to the increase of their own; hence agriculture has languished, and commerce been shackled by improvident laws; and hence smuggling, that fertile source of evil, while it has worked out all its demoralizing effects, has at the same time greatly diminished the revenue. Hence also education has been neglected, and the vices springing from ignorance left unchecked; hence factions have been multiplied, and Justice herself has not always been able to resist the influence of political excitement, and the temptations to individual venality. Hence, in short, a narrow foreign policy, and an unhappy domestic one, have too much pervaded the different states of the ex-colonial possessions of Spain.

In the midst of all this, the theory of repub-

lican independence, of civil and judicial rectitude, has been always upheld ; and a legislative perfection, unattained by the oldest states, has been constantly aimed at by these infant communities. Yet, while the title of viceroy has been changed for that of president ; while royal audiencias (or courts) have been superseded by senates ; while cabildos have given way to justices of the peace ; and a council of state to a provincial assembly ; we could wish that the nature of the offices had been as effectually changed as the name ; for it is to be feared that in many of their features they still too much resemble the offices under the old Spanish régime. It is pleasing, however, to know and to record, that an amelioration, to a greater or less extent, has taken place in the political institutions of all the new republics : nor, considering the disadvantages under which they have laboured, could it fairly be expected that such amelioration should have been either rapidly or extensively developed.

In order properly to connect this state of things with its primary causes, it will be necessary, just for a moment, to glance at the state of Old Spain, about the time of the invasion of that country by

Bonaparte. That was also the time at which the first symptoms of revolutionary feeling became observable in South America.

The degradation and poverty into which the Spanish nation had then sunk, are too well known to require any elucidation here. An imbecile king,—a traitorous Prince of Peace,—a corrupt nobility,—a powerful, bigoted, and tyrannical priesthood,—the middling classes of the inhabitants without either education or patriotism,—an exhausted revenue,—a miserable army,—and an annihilated navy,—with, as the only respectable feature of national affairs, a noble peasantry :—such were the shattered elements of which the Spanish monarchy was composed.

This state of things, we know, was the result of long national grievance and misrule : and, if we consider the tendency there is in all delegated governments to become worse, in proportion as they are thrown at a distance from the centre of authority, we may form some estimate, from what we know the Spanish monarchy to have been, of what her vice-regal monarchies in miniature in the New World, at a distance of from five to ten thousand miles, *must* have been.

South America, while dependent on the mother country, was under the rule of viceroys and captains-general, whose sway was almost regal. Next to them in power, as an intermediate link between them and the people, in civil and criminal affairs, were the audiencias, or supreme courts of justice ; and lastly, there was the cabildo, a municipal body corresponding, in some measure, to our institution of mayor and aldermen.

Under the particular instruction of the Spanish cabinet, and with the laws of the Indies as an ostensible code, did the viceroy, and those subordinate to him, conduct the affairs of the Spanish colonies.

The instructions given to the viceroy by the Spanish court, however,—from distance,—from the general system of Spanish mal-administration,—and from the difficulty of establishing any practical responsibility of office,—became nearly a dead letter. To this they invariably turned whenever it was the viceroy's interest to render them so ; which it generally was, when they had for their object the amelioration of the country over which he presided, and of which the effectual misrule was his positive gain.

The laws of the Indies, though framed in many respects with a humane tendency, and liberal policy, were seldom carried into effect, and almost never for the benefit of the community. Spain in her poverty was a continual drain upon the colonies; and all the revenue that could be raised from them on the plan of a jealous and restricted commercial policy, was ever urgently called for by the mother country. So much only was kept back as was necessary to defray the expenses of the local government, and satisfy the demands of a corrupt and rapacious colonial administration. In proportion as the exigencies of Spain increased, a still greater relaxation in the government of the colonies took place. More supplies were wanted by the mother country, in consequence of the growing expense to which she was put by the French invasion. Smaller sums were remitted from America, on the allegation of symptoms of discontent in the colonies. It was alleged that these required to be awed into silence by additional force, and of course additional expense. The force was not provided; but the supplies stated to be necessary for its payment were withheld from Spain.

From the weakness to which Spain was reduced by foreign invasion and domestic strife, and from a relaxation of the control which she exercised over her colonies, these latter began to consider whether they might not legally assert, and, *vis et armis*, maintain the same rights to govern, by juntas, their own affairs, which some of the provinces of Spain had assumed in the government of theirs. On looking around them, in towns which were the seats of a viceroy or president, the Creoles saw him supported, at the most, by half-a-dozen regiments of ill-disciplined infantry; by a slight train of artillery; and by a squadron or two of cavalry. Many of the officers, and even some of the commanders, of these troops were natives; they were encompassed by a population, of which the proportion to themselves of old Spaniards was not as one to twenty; they knew that the greater part of the militia of the country was made up of American-born subjects; that most of the provincial towns, though commanded by military chiefs from Old Spain, were garrisoned by native troops; and that the parent state, under her present difficulties, could do little or nothing against them in the way of invasion.

Upon these observed matters of fact, and upon the plausible ground of legal right to follow the example of self-government set by the juntas of Spain, did the South Americans commence their Revolution.

Yours, &c.

THE AUTHORS.

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## LETTER III.

## INTRODUCTORY.

To J—— G——, Esq.

Revolution in Buenos Ayres—In the Interior Provinces—Death of General Liniers—His character—Anecdote of him—Revolution in Paraguay—Revolution in Upper Peru—General Elio and Montevideo—Final emancipation—Civil discord—Character of warfare—General Miller.

*London, 1838.*

**BUENOS AYRES** was the first of the disaffected viceroyalties that made any effectual innovation upon the order of things that had been established by Old Spain. The greater proximity of the capital of the River Plate, than of the other Spanish possessions in South America, to Europe; an abatement, by Spain, in favour of Buenos Ayres, of some of the restrictions under which the other viceroyalties had been laid; the total absence of nobility, and of the feudal feeling which, under their influence, pervaded some of the other parts of South America; these things,

together with a great accession of light poured in upon Buenos Ayres by General Whitelock's invasion, and great confidence created in her own resources by his defeat, all seemed to mark it out as the place destined to stand forth in the van of revolutionary movement.

So it did; and the remarks which follow have reference more immediately to that state. At the same time they will show a very close analogy between the workings of the Revolution in the River Plate and elsewhere, because, in point of fact, with slight modifications, the efforts made to throw off the yoke of Old Spain, and the results of those efforts, have been nearly similar throughout South America. In reciting the events connected with one revolutionary movement, you show forth the general principles, and almost the historical details of all. In each, and every province the same thing was to be done by people of one common family, brought up under the same laws and institutions. They had to rid themselves of the Spanish yoke, and, after doing so, to organize governments of their own. How well they succeeded in the former effort, and to what an extent they have as yet failed in the latter, you have

already been told. But to descend a little more to particulars.

The revolution in Buenos Ayres (Cizneros being then viceroy) commenced in 1810, in this way:—

Cornelio Saavedra, colonel of the best regiment in town, and himself a South American, so far concerted measures with the other military chiefs whom he could bring over to his interest, as to secure their co-operation in the overthrow of the Spanish authorities. This Saavedra, with one or two more chiefs, having previously put their regiment under arms, waited on the viceroy and told him with much civility, but great decision, that the order of things was about to be changed. A similar intimation was conveyed to the *audiencia*, or supreme court of justice, and to the *cabildo*, or mayor and aldermen's court. This latter was then constrained to summon the inhabitants of the town to what is called a "*cabildo abierto*," or open court, and to inform them of the contemplated change in the government of the country. This change consisted in the substitution for the viceroy's sole authority, of that of a *junta*, the leading and influential men of

which were to be Americans. The viceroy, aware now that the military were against him, without time to calculate, and certainly unable to foresee, the extent of innovation, with which the present movement was fraught, found himself in the new and anomalous position of being constrained not only to relinquish his vice-regal power, but to exchange it for a vote as member of that very revolutionary junta, which had deposed him.

The ostensible object of this junta was to uphold the sacred rights of Ferdinand VII., in whose name all its first decrees were issued. Its real object, however, was to pave the way for that complete independence of the mother country which was, at no distant period, proclaimed.

There was policy connected with the incorporation, for two or three days, of the viceroy with the junta as one of its members. Some extolled it as creditable to the sagacity of the junta ; others condemned it as indicative only of the craft of the revolutionary leaders.

It was certainly, in its effects, at once degrading to Cizneros, and injurious to the interests of Spain.

The viceroy's name was associated, as a mem-

ber of the junta, with its first proceedings, and attached to the orders forthwith issued to the provincial troops and towns to recognise the newly-constituted authorities. These orders were, of course, very conducive to the speedy attainment of the object desired. This accomplished, and accomplished with the apparent concurrence of the poor viceroy, he was shipped off, and with him the leading members of the audiencia, in a small cutter, at midnight, for Old Spain, or the Canary Islands.

These transactions, it will be seen, ushered in a revolution, which, though partial in its avowed object, has proved complete in its ultimate effect; and yet, during the whole of the movement described, not a single life was lost.

The power which had governed the country for three hundred years was overthrown in one night; the Creoles, who had been considered by the old Spaniards as an inferior race of beings, had now the fate and fortune of those Spaniards in their hands; the treasures of the New Continent, instead of being unlocked, as heretofore, for the use of the mother country, were now to be

employed for the permanent annihilation of her authority.

A very few weeks brought all the interior towns and provinces in the ancient viceroyalty of Buenos Ayres over to the views, and under the control, of the capital, with the exceptions of Cordova, Paraguay, a portion of Upper Peru, and Montevideo. Wherever a change of government took place, it was effected in pretty much the same way,—with equal quiet,—it may almost be said with like civility to the Spanish authorities,—as at Buenos Ayres.

This state sent against Cordova a small force under the command of General Casteli; and it defeated a body of about 800 men (called in South America an army) led against the Buenos Ayres troops by General Liniers, and the Bishop of Cordova.

It was this same General Liniers who had so successfully repelled the attack made by General Whitelock, on Buenos Ayres, only three years before. By a loose liberality of conduct, very affable manners, and prodigal distribution of vice-regal favour, he had acquired great popularity;

but though he was undoubtedly a brave officer, and though his little body of men was exhorted and encouraged to the combat by the bishop, Liniers was defeated, made prisoner, and with several of the officers nearest to him in rank, he was shot not far from the field of battle, as a rebel. The bishop himself made a very narrow escape from a similar fate; and thus timely warning was given to the church, that clerical dignity, in the new order of things, should be no shield to political delinquency. This was the first blood, it may be said, which was spilt in the revolutionary cause.

Every one regretted the untimely fate of Liniers. He was a man, who, so far from ever having used his authority of viceroy for purposes of despotism or oppression, seemed only to value it as affording him the means of doing universal good. There was scarcely an inhabitant of Buenos Ayres who had not, one way or the other, been beholden to him. He had the rare virtue, as a public man, of allowing distress in all its varied forms to be its own title to his relief of it; and merit, with him, was the best and surest

passport to promotion. He was sometimes blamed for making himself *too* accessible, and very often, for too great a facility in granting favours. The milk of human kindness was so little counteracted in its course by any tincture of gall, that it flowed forth in a perpetual stream of blessing to all around him. His benevolence was limited to no particular class; and his philanthropic spirit was so universally esteemed, that his very enemies allowed that even "his failings leaned to virtue's side."

The following anecdote, communicated by the officer who was the subject of it, may serve to illustrate at once the facility complained of, and the good nature admired, in General Liniers. Lieut. Gonsalez had distinguished himself in the defence of Buenos Ayres against the English, and went accordingly to Liniers to lay before him his claim to promotion. It was at once admitted, and orders were given, in the lieutenant's presence, to promote him to the rank of captain. "Sir," said the officer, "you have fulfilled my most sanguine expectations, and laid me under an obligation to you, which I trust I shall ever



bear in grateful remembrance. But, alas! I am not in a condition to accept the rank you have conferred on me."

"How so?" asked the viceroy, somewhat surprised. "Indeed, Sir," replied Gonsalez, "to be candid with your Excellency, I have not money enough to buy the two epaulettes and lace necessary to equip me as a captain."

"Well," said General Liniers, "that is rather unfortunate, particularly as I am myself too poor to help you. But do you think you could contrive to purchase a *lieutenant-colonel's* uniform?" "Oh that I could, your Excellency," replied the half-doubting and astonished man. "Well, then," said the viceroy, "you shall be a lieutenant-colonel instead of a captain."

It may be necessary to remark that the uniform in the Spanish service gets plainer and less costly as the officer advances in rank; and that while a captain has two gaudy epaulettes, and a great superfluity of lace on his coat, the only badge by which a lieutenant-colonel is distinguished consists in a couple of very narrow strips of gold lace on his coat-sleeve. This will account for the manner in which General Liniers at once

met the poverty, and increased the rank of an indigent, but meritorious officer.

It was the very popularity and amiability of Liniers which led to his death. They would have spared, in the same circumstances, a man who had less hold on the feelings and affections of the people.

An expedition, similar to that despatched against Cordova, was now sent by Buenos Ayres against Paraguay, under the command of General Belgrano.

The two Paraguayan chiefs, Yegros and Cavalero, acting under the authority of the Spanish General Velasco, then governor of Paraguay, defeated Belgrano's army. But though Belgrano was defeated, the Spanish power in Paraguay was very shortly afterwards overthrown; for the Paraguayan generals referred to, in command of the victorious troops, turned themselves against Velasco's authority, and established, again without bloodshed, an independent junta. Of this junta the celebrated Dr. Francia was, first the secretary, and afterwards a member; but as we shall give you, in subsequent letters, as well an account of him as of the isolated province

which for near thirty years he has ruled, and which he still rules with a rod of iron, it is unnecessary to say more on the subject here, than is required to show its connexion with the events now under consideration.

General Casteli's little army, augmented at Cordova, proceeded to Upper Peru; but being defeated by a superior force at the Desaguadero, failed of then achieving its object, which was to push the revolution into the interior of that country.

It soon afterwards, however, asserted its own independence; and though it was for some time alternately free, and subject to the control of the Viceroy of Lima, it has now, for many years, been an independent state. It was finally wrested from Spain by General Sucre, after the battle of Ayacucho, and it then obtained the designation of Bolivia, in honour of General Bolivar.

Thus, in the course of a few months after the first revolutionary movement at Buenos Ayres, the whole provinces on one side of the River Plate, and many of those on the other, as far as Mendoza at the foot of the Andes, on the *west*, and as high as Upper Peru, and the borders of the Brazilian

territory on the *north*, were, with very little warfare, completely emancipated from the authority of Old Spain.

Montevideo, and a small portion of territory on what is called the Banda Oriental, or east side of the River Plate, held out for about three years longer, under the command of General Elio. This person was despatched with reinforcements from Spain, some time after the news of the revolution at Buenos Ayres had reached that country. He came dignified with the title of Viceroy, and it was intended that he should reassume the authority connected with it over the revolted provinces. But he was too late. The fortress of Montevideo was besieged by General Alvear; Elio's fleet was boarded and taken on a morning of dense fog by Admiral Brown, who commanded a few merchant-ships very indifferently equipped, under the flag of Buenos Ayres; and the Viceroy, penned up within the walls (his fortress being at once bombarded, blockaded, and in a state of starvation), capitulated, retired to Spain, and left the whole country in the unmolested possession of the revolutionary party.

It has been already observed, that in some of

the viceroyalties the war with Spain was later begun, and that in others, especially Colombia, it was more protracted than in the River Plate.

The concluding struggle, in the southern hemisphere, was in Peru. It was carried on with various success on either side till, first the battle of Ayacucho (fought on the 9th of December, 1824), and subsequently the surrender of Callao by Rodil (on the 19th of January, 1826), established the independence of the whole country. From that time till this, generally, and in respect to the River Plate, from a much earlier period, all that we have heard of revolutions, military movements, and political changes, has had reference to intestine quarrels among the Americans themselves. We shall say nothing of the pretexts upon which these petty but desolating civil wars have been undertaken and carried on; but the effect of them, too obvious for a moment to be disputed, has been to leave the land more impoverished, and the inhabitants more divided, every successive year.

A general engagement in South America has always meant a battle in which from three to four

thousand men,—very seldom five thousand,—have been engaged on each side.

General San Martin's crossing of the Cordillera of the Andes with four thousand men to liberate Chile; the battles which he fought at Chacabuco and Maypu, on entering that territory; the battle of Ayacucho, which finally liberated Peru; and two or three of General Bolivar's engagements in Colombia, approach more to the character of scientific warfare, than attaches to the more frequent, but less formidable movements and petty encounters, by which the revolution was mainly effected.

No doubt many hardships were undergone, and many privations endured, in the course of the desultory fighting and guerilla campaigns carried on by the Americans against the Spanish forces, which existed at the commencement, or were organized in the course of the revolution.

Brigadier-generals with divisions of four hundred men; colonels or captains with one or two companies; small parties of militia armed with rusty pikes, carbines, and sabres, without coats, without shoes, mounted on lean horses, with one ear cropped to show they belonged to the "patria"

—with beef, and beef only, for their sustenance, and the open firmament of heaven for a canopy; have signalized themselves by acts of great bravery, and given many proofs of hardihood and address.

General Miller, for instance, whose name is associated with all that is brave in the wars of Chile and Peru, and who distinguished himself in almost every great action fought during their course, can afford our mention of him here, on a small scale. He once marched with a force of a hundred and fifty men from the Peruvian coast to the environs of a town called Arequipa, ninety miles inland, and containing 16,000 inhabitants. He threw it into the utmost consternation, from the belief which he artfully diffused among the inhabitants, that he had a greater force behind; till, having effected his object,—which was to draw off a division from the enemy's main body, about to be attacked by the army to which General Miller belonged,—he made good a most arduous and difficult retreat through a barren and desert country, and came to Lima, with the loss of very few men, though, before he could reach his point of embarkation, he was

harassed and hemmed in by greatly superior forces on every side.

Feats like this are of frequent occurrence in the history of the revolution: nor is it devoid of the materials necessary to furnish details of military movements which might be of interest to military men. But our object is to give an account of leading facts and general results. This slight sketch of the position, in a military point of view, of Buenos Ayres, and more or less of all Spanish America, shall therefore suffice. We now proceed to give you a rapid sketch of the state in which the South Americans were left by their revolution.

Yours, &c.,

THE AUTHORS.

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## LETTER IV.

## INTRODUCTORY.

To J—— G——, Esq.

Spanish Population of South America—South American Nobility  
—South American Education—the Clergy—the Lawyers—  
the Landed Proprietors of Chile and Peru—Estancias, or  
Cattle Farms—Estancieros, or Landed Proprietors of Buenos  
Ayres—Chacareros, Farmers or Yeomen—General Remarks.

HAVING, then, in the way stated, freed themselves from the force by which they had been held in subjection, the Americans had now a much more arduous, and, as it has proved to them, a more difficult work to undertake,—that of their political regeneration.

In order the better to appreciate the difficulties under which they have laboured in this respect, and to ascertain the causes which have operated to retard, up to the present moment, the establishment among them of anything like settled or free governments, in an Englishman's acceptance of the phrase, it will be necessary to give some

account of the course of education to which Old Spain limited the inhabitants of her colonies, and of the moral and religious state of society which grew out of it.

In the first place, it is to be observed, that those who emigrated from Old Spain to settle in the colonies, were generally men of neither family, fortune, nor education at home. Storekeepers from Galicia, small merchants and publicans from Catalonia, clerks and attorneys from Biscay, and sailors, drudges, and mechanics from Andalusia, made up the mass of the old Spanish population. It was only the Viceroy, his staff, and more immediate dependents, the members of the *audiencia*, or judges, the employés of the public offices, and officers of the navy, who had any pretensions either to gentlemanlike deportment or tolerable education. Liberality of feeling, extension of view, or anything approaching to philosophic and enlightened principle, not having been taught, even to their betters, in their own country, could not be imported by them into the new one they adopted. All the natives of Old Spain were emphatically and indiscriminately denominated by the South Americans, "Godos," or "Goths."

There was another class of inhabitants not to be found in Buenos Ayres, but abundant in Chile and Peru, descended from the early settlers, and who had lofty pretensions to birth. Many of them were furnished with titles of nobility. This class, however, had no better claims either to manners or education than their neighbours. A long course of living *à son gré*; of indulging in all the loose habits which such a climate very often generates; and of falling into a disregard of such outward decorum and family observances, as involved the slightest personal inconvenience, caused the dignity of the nobleman to yield to the ease of the plebeian; till at last the only traces of the origin of the marquess and the count were to be found in the gilt wheels of their cumbrous carriages, or the uncouth griffins and lions rampant, carved in wood and daubed with paint, over the gateways of their mansions.

We have had the honour of dining with some of these noblemen; and we have seen them sit down to dinner with their shirt-sleeves rolled up to their elbows; their shirt-collars arranged purely for the convenience of free breathing; the females of the house attired in their morning *deshabille*,

and the party attended by black slaves, clothed with the same happy and uncereemonious reference to ease and comfort.

Two female slaves, with towels over their shoulders, carried large silver basins round the table after dinner, for the necessary purpose of ablution. The luxury of finger-glasses had not yet superseded in Lima this more primitive mode, at once of washing hands, and evincing family concord. After this, taking from a glass a small wooden toothpick, with elbows on the table, and in all the familiarity of chit-chat, listless, a little, and monotonous, the party began to pick their teeth. Drowsiness at length was indicated by many a nod; and, under the increasing heat of the day, the hour of the siesta was proclaimed with many a yawn. The whole party, by common consent, then walked off, each to their respective chambers, where, darkening the room, and still further disencumbering the body of every superfluous appendage, they sank into all the luxury of the siesta, or two hours' nap after dinner.

Hereditary title and distinction have been lost in the Revolution; and the nobleman has fallen back into the ranks of the commonalty.

For the education of the sons of these different classes of inhabitants of the Spanish colonies, there were distributed over the continent several colleges founded by the Jesuits, and universities almost entirely under the direction of the priests. In Cordova, there was one more celebrated university than the rest,—a sort of South American Salamanca;—in Lima there was another. Cuzco, Chuquisaca, and Santa Fé de Bogotá were seats of learning of almost equal note. To these resorted all the youth from the different and far distant towns and villages of the continent, for such education as the universities afforded; and they returned to the places of their nativity, and to their own families, what they were made by the course of instruction to which in the mean time they had been subjected.

The branches taught were *Literæ Humaniores*,—the theology of the Roman Catholic church,—the philosophy of the schools,—logic, upon the strictest models of syllogistic precision,—the code of Roman law, with all the minutiae of Spanish jurisprudence. The universities only professed, in fact, to make theologians and lawyers. The profession of medicine was in the hands of here

and there a better sort of quack from Old Spain, who, mounted on his mule, with a peak saddle and silver bridle, looked down with disdain upon the crowd of mulatto practitioners, who drew teeth, let blood, and dealt in simples. Surgery was almost unknown; and the sciences of chemistry, mathematics, and natural philosophy, as taught in these enlightened days, were altogether proscribed. They were considered not as useless merely, but as dangerous to the state. Not content with having its subjects thus closely pent up within the confines of ignorance and superstition, the court readily concurred with the inquisition in framing progressively enlarged lists, which it was ever issuing, of prohibited books. Locke, Milton, Montesquieu, and all their heretical followers, it is well known, were included in those lists; so that knowledge, even with all the allay of the schools, and all the trash of councils, was literally weighed out to the Americans in grains and scruples.

Such was the state, generally, of ignorance and prejudice in which South America was, at the period at which the Revolution broke out. Of natural or unschooled talent there is a

great deal there. A vivacious imagination is almost universal in the inhabitants; and in the fine language which they possess, they express themselves with a fluency, if not an eloquence, at which we seldom aim, and to which we much seldomer attain. This facility has grown out of their tertulia, or conversazione habits. Among the lawyers, the constant practice of dictating to an amanuensis, the definitions, reasonings, and refutations in the various cases in which they are retained, enables them often to write, and to write with fluency and elegance, upon subjects, the theory and bearing of which they study for the occasion. Of course, all such writings are more plausible than profound—more replete with declamation than sound reasoning. The imagination of the South American is constantly at work; and, unconsciously perhaps, he is ever showing forth, among his countrymen, things as they ought to be, not as they are. When we hear him descant, in glowing and eloquent terms, on “civil liberty,” “freedom of the press,” “liberal education,” “privileges of the constitution,” we fancy there must be a tolerably good foundation laid of all these blessings before so much could be said about them.

Yet the ideas which are raised in *our* minds by the enumeration of such social benefits, are certainly different from those which arise in the mind of a South American. As yet the whole is to him little better than a theory, while it forms with us a series of practical principles, which we have been cultivating and perfecting during a course of consecutive ages.

Spain so arranged her system of education in the colonies, as to make theology the study of chief attraction, because, constituted as the Roman Catholic church was, she thought it the system least likely to interfere with her political plans; or rather she thought it would be their best prop. And so it was,—the main one,—as long as the clergy continued faithful in their allegiance. This was only so long, however, as the power of dispensing ecclesiastical favour was retained by Spain. Whenever, by any military movement, the temporal authority of the mother country was upset, and the spiritual authority menaced, as it generally soon after was, in the person of the bishop, the inferior members of the church (those in immediate contact with the people) a little hesitated; but they soon finally declared for the new order of things. Their natural sa-



gacity, where self-interest was concerned, soon taught them to see that it was on the movers of the Revolution they were hereafter to depend for promotion. Spain, as a lure to theological study, had sometimes conferred canonships, deaneries, and even bishoprics upon the natives of South America ; but generally, while the offices of curate and friar were freely enough bestowed on them, the higher, more authoritative, and lucrative dignities of the church, were in the hands either of natives of the mother country, or of persons closely connected with them by the bonds of interest and relationship. These European dignitaries and their adherents were shaken upon their seats, and many of them *from* their seats, by the first shock of revolutionary commotion. The aspiring Creoles lifted up their eyes from their curacies and convents to the high places of dignity already vacant, and to the many more that no distant futurity seemed to be preparing for new occupants. The political and more active movers in the Revolution saw and encouraged this ambition in the clergy. They not only promised to them higher ecclesiastical authority, but invited them to a participation of that which was purely poli-

tical. They embodied them in their provincial legislatures, sent them on diplomatic missions, and gave them to understand that, while the prejudices of the people rendered it necessary still to acknowledge the authority of the pope, yet that the clerical affairs of South America should be substantially regulated thenceforward by the clergy themselves.\*

Thus the inferior and middling ranks of this class advocated, almost to a man, the cause of the Revolution, and brought over to its support, with feelings of sacred and religious obligation, whole masses of the lower orders. Little did those holy men then calculate or foresee that a reaction was at the door. Their eagerness to go up and take possession of the chief seats of civil and ecclesiastical authority, blinded them to the consideration that it was in the very nature of the Revolution which had shaken the authority of the pope, and superseded that of the bishop, soon to overturn their own. They saw not that the popular assemblies of which they had become members, weak and ignorant as they

\* Ferdinand was made the political stalking-horse, and the pope the ecclesiastical one.

were, had that in their constitution of deliberation and debate, for which a Cordova education was inadequate, and with which a blind adherence to the dictates of their church was wholly incompatible. This reaction has certainly not yet *fully* taken place, but it is *taking* place. In Buenos Ayres, with reference to the friars, it may be said really to have been brought about. From all of the fraternities, save one, the convents and revenues there have been taken and converted to the public use.

The lawyers returned to their homes, from the university, a better and less ignorant class of men than the clergy. Yet law is nowhere in the world, perhaps,—not even in our own court of chancery,—a less tangible means of deciding a difficulty with justice and despatch, than in Buenos Ayres,—or in South America generally. A law plea there is an *ignis fatuus*, which, if obstinately pursued, is sure to lead all who follow it up,—the gainer, as well as the loser,—into the quagmire of ruin at last. It may be otherwise, indeed, if one of the parties can, at an early stage of the question, effectually buy justice; but even then, he gains just so

much as the amount contended for, less the sum expended in the way of bribery and corruption. Justice in South America is sadly tainted with venality, and the amount of *douceur* to a judge, or to an advocate of the opposing party, is so nicely measured by the nature of the case, and of the sum at issue, that a man's gain is rather what he does not lose, by following up the plea, than what it profits him to bring it even to a successful termination.

Honest judges and advocates there certainly are; and in some causes of which we know, the pleadings have not been less acute and eloquent, than the judgments characterized by legal knowledge and precision. At the same time, it often happens, when the intentions of the judge are really good, that he is sorely puzzled, from the habits acquired at the university of making the same case out to be logically right, and logically wrong, how to give legal effect to a righteous judgment. Sometimes, too, you find on the part of the judge, a continued, though probably unconscious, mental reservation, in favour of the fortune and rank of a party litigant. Or there is a bias towards him on account of personal

friendship. The mind of the judge is thus swayed against the reasoning, and his eyes are turned from the facts and justice of the case ; till at length he is furnished with zealous sophistry, in support of a decision against both fact and law.

There is a commercial tribunal, or court, in the country, called the Consulado, over which a prior and two consuls,—or associates,—preside, for the trial of cases connected with trade and commerce. This is a respectable, as well as valuable institution. Its decisions are generally given on a *procès verbal* ; but it also decides, like the courts of Scotland, upon cases conducted in writing, and extending to a great length.

The judges of the Consulado are elected annually, and in general from among the body of merchants. They are, on the whole, the best-informed, and most respectable members of the mercantile class.

Unfortunately it is an inferior court ; and its decisions, founded on common sense and equity, may be, and often are, reversed in the higher tribunals.

The youth of the community not educated for

the church or the law, become managers of their paternal estates, merchants, or shopkeepers. In Chile and Peru, where the estates are large and productive, with a slave or vassal population to farm them,—sometimes, too, with a title of nobility annexed to them,—the possession of landed property, before the Revolution, was deemed an enviable privilege, and the management of it a desirable occupation. In those countries the large landed proprietors looked down upon the merchants as on men of a distinctly inferior grade to their own in society.

In Buenos Ayres and Paraguay it was otherwise. The only landed possessions considered of any value in the former place were the large estancias, or cattle-farms. Many of these contained 80 and 100 square miles of land, and some of them vastly more.\* On this whole extent of territory, there were not perhaps to be found more than three or four mud huts, which served as habitations for the ten or fifteen herds who tended the cattle, with one hut of some-

\* The Anchorena Family is said to be possessed of four hundred square leagues (equal to twelve hundred square miles) of land, in the province of Buenos Ayres; and they derive an annual income of 20,000*l.* from the sale of their surplus cattle.

what better construction for the owner of the estate.

Each estate of this kind had generally upon it from five to twelve or fifteen thousand head of horned cattle ; of which it is calculated that the owner may sell, or kill, yearly, one-fourth, and yet increase his stock. The proprietors of these estancias, however, though men of solid property, did not, previously to the Revolution, attain to much importance in the community, for the following reasons.

In the first place, a limited and restricted commerce kept hides, the produce of their estates, at a very low value. An ox was seldom, before the Revolution, worth more than four shillings : so that even if one of the most wealthy of them, with 15,000 head of cattle on his estate, killed or sold the fourth part, annually, his income did not exceed 800*l.* a-year. In the second place, small as their incomes were, they did not spend the half of them. In most cases, unfortunately, a large proportion was absorbed by gambling. In town they lived in obscurity, while, in the country, like the peons, or herds, by whom they were surrounded, they had a mud hut for their dwell-

ing,—beef, and little more than beef, for their diet. In the third place, they were almost all *natives of the country*, rustic in manners, and rude in scholarship and address,—being possessed of the merest rudiments of a grammar-school education. They were without the learning, scanty as it was, of either the priest or the lawyer; and without the means, therefore, of interposing that qualification to the claims of superiority ever put forward by the haughty natives of Old Spain, and by the better educated classes of the estanciero's own countrymen.

The estanciero, or landed and cattle proprietor, feeling his inferiority, and taking his station in society accordingly, had his solace and his recreation in his own solitary avocations, and in the occasional society of those of his own class, with whom he could expatiate upon fat herds of cattle,—fine years for pasture,—horses more fleet than the ostrich or the deer,—the dexterity of those who could best, from the saddle, throw their noose, or laso, over the horns of a wild bull,—or of him who could make the nicest pair of boots from the skin stripped off the legs of a *potro*, or wild colt.



A good, substantial, roughly-finished house in town, with very little furniture in it; a large, sleek, fat horse, on which to ride;—a poncho or loose amplitude of camlet stuff, with a hole in the centre of it for his head, and falling from his shoulders over his body;—large silver spurs, and the head-piece of his bridle heavily overlaid with the same metal;—a coarse hat fastened with black leather thongs under his chin;—a tinder-box, steel, and flint, with which to light his cigar;—a knife in his girdle, and a swarthy page behind him, with the unroasted ribs of a fat cow, for provision, under his saddle;—constituted the most solid comfort, and met the most luxurious aspirations of the estanciero, or Buenos Ayres country gentleman. When, thus equipped and provided, he could take to the plains, and see a large herd of cattle grazing in one place,—and in another, hear them lowing in the distance; and when he could look round for uninterrupted miles upon rich pastures, all his own—his joy was full; his ambition satisfied; and he was willing at once to forget, and to forego, the tasteless enjoyments and cumbrous distinctions of artificial society.

Thus lived,—and thus was the country gentleman of the River Plate educated, before the Revolution. He is now greatly improved in manners,—fortune,—and mode of life;—and he is rising gradually, but surely, to that influence to which a greatly increased and increasing value of property naturally leads. His cattle, which before the Revolution were worth only four shillings a-head, are now worth twenty; and for these twenty he can buy double the quantity, both of the necessaries and luxuries of life (his own commodity of cattle always excepted), which he could procure for them before. Comfort and convenience in his town residence are now as necessary to him and his family as to the other classes of the community. He mixes more freely in general society, takes a share in the affairs and offices of state, educates his children more liberally; and though the estanciero himself may still adhere to many of his primitive and favourite habits, yet many a rich estanciero's wife and daughters are to be seen driving about in handsome and modern-built carriages of their own.

A respectable, and, for their situation, an intelligent class of the country population is made

up of the chacareros. These may be called, what the Scotch term "bonnet lairds," the properties they cultivate being invariably their own. They are the yeomanry of the country. A "suerte de chacara," or lot of farming-ground, is, by original crown grant, of the extent of a league and a half one way, by half a league the other. It is equal to about six thousand acres; but is increased or diminished in size according to its distance from the city, to which it is most contiguous. These chacaras generally extend on all sides of the towns to the distance of six or seven leagues. The farmers invariably live on their chacaras, and are, though neither a very industrious nor scientific class of men, yet respectable and useful in their way. The intercourse which they keep up with the inhabitants of the city gives them a quickness and shrewdness of apprehension, which many of the small estancieros lack. The chacarero is generally brave, frank, and hospitable. His spouse and daughters are fond of gaudy finery; and he himself, on the "dia de fiesta," or holiday, decks out his horse and person (they being more "one flesh" than he and his wife) in rich trappings and gay apparel. Nothing can be more picturesque or pleasing

than to see him mounted on his charger, escorting his family, also mounted, and bedizened with all the colours of the rainbow, to the nearest capilla, or church, to attend mass of a Sunday. He afterwards mixes, in the vicinity of the chapel, in kind and courteous intercourse with his surrounding neighbours.

The classes of men enumerated, with the merchants, retail dealers, store-keepers, mechanics, and a large proportion of creole black and mulatto population, in the capacity of labouring people, and domestic servants, make up the mass of the inhabitants of Spanish America.

From what has been said, you will see that the tendency, if not the object of education, in South America, has been to keep the people in a state, at most a few degrees removed from that of absolute ignorance. As a necessary consequence of this, and of the low opinion in which they were held by the natives of the mother country, they had sunk generally into political indifference, and had yielded to many immoral habits. It is abundantly evident that it was little short of an absurdity to expect, that from such a state of moral degradation the people should all at once have sprung into a condition

of manly integrity, public spirit, patriotic zeal, political knowledge, or real independence of character. Of course, we speak generally; and we record with pleasure that very many honourable exceptions existed and exist to the general rule. Thus it was, then, that though the South Americans did not want the penetration to perceive, from the weakness of Spain, as contrasted with their own comparative strength, that in *this* respect the moment for revolutionary movement had arrived, they yet were in no position to give to the Revolution a high character of moral standing. They were destitute of many of the elements required to make it immediately beneficial to them, as citizens and as men. A considerable time will in all probability yet elapse before the civil institutions of the country can possibly attain the stability, or be founded in the wisdom necessary to keep any tolerable pace with the great natural improvements and wealth of which the country is really susceptible. An enlarged and enlightened system of general education must be the forerunner of any such stability, and is alone adequate to usher in their really moral and religious emancipation.

At the same time it would appear, if what has here been said be founded on correct observation, that those who have expected an earlier development of the advantages of the South American Revolution, have expected what it was not in the education, character, or circumstances of the inhabitants of the country to effect; and that the erroneous conceptions formed of its character and importance have grown out of the too sanguine views of those connected with it. But it is also indisputable, that these erroneous conceptions have in no small degree owed their origin to the eager spirit of speculation, which in England magnified supposed advantages, exaggerated and sometimes distorted sober facts. Lastly, it is undeniable that much of the error which has prevailed on the subject of South America is to be traced to the measures of the British cabinet. Whether those measures had their origin in motives of European policy, or are to be imputed to ignorance of the capabilities and real state of the country, it seems not of much importance, even if it were possible, now to determine.

Yours, &c.

THE AUTHORS.

## LETTER V.

To J—— G——, Esq.

## CONCLUSION OF INTRODUCTORY SERIES.

First Attempts of the South Americans at Legislation—Classes of Legislators—South American Constitutions—Nature of Civil Broils—Legislation—Debates in Lima—the Congress of Lima—the Congress of Buenos Ayres—General Form of Debate—the Governor's Palace—His Excellency the Governor—Government Offices—Legislative and Executive Powers—Naval and Military Force—Impossibility of conquering South America—Difficulties with which the South Americans have still to contend—the English in South America—What Foreigners have to expect there.

*London, 1838.*

THE first movement of the Spanish provinces, after they had fairly got quit of the military power of Old Spain, was of course in a popular direction. Professing republicanism, they thought it necessary to regulate the affairs of the community by the common consent of representatives chosen by the people. This was the commencement of all their difficulties. They assumed it

to be necessary to do that, which, in the circumstances of the country, it was impossible to do. Representatives they certainly got together, but not representatives freely chosen by the people. Nor, if they *had* been so chosen, is it at all certain that the case would have been materially mended. The country could not *furnish* proper representatives; but, collected together as they generally were, under the immediate influence of the military or political chief in power for the time being, they not only brought with them an incapacity for legislative enactments, but had attached to them, in public estimation, and still more in the sagacious and jealous estimation of rival aspirants, the stamp of identity with the interests and views of the man in present possession of power.

It almost invariably followed, therefore, that a dissolution of the popular assemblies thus constituted, was coeval with the deposition of the chief to whom they owed their authority, and with whose fortunes they were more or less identified.

The current of popular feeling in favour of institutions of a free character, had so far set in, that all those who aimed at power found it



to be the safest and easiest way to attain and keep it, to leave the people, not the reality, but at least the semblance of liberty. They profusely emblazoned its name, therefore, in conspicuous letters, in all their public documents and manifestos.

No genius acute enough, nor any little despot daring enough, made his appearance, prepared to exercise unlimited sway, or capable of carrying things exclusively with reference to his own ambitious views, without this sacrifice to the tendency of public opinion, in favour of popular institutions. Even Bolivar found it necessary, till within a very late period of his despotic career, to cloak all his projects of aggrandizement under the guise of affected respect for such assemblies. Doctor Francia alone, in the government of Paraguay, has shown himself above this necessity; but his whole case, as we shall by-and-by see, is so completely *sui generis*,—so isolated and unique,—as in no way to bear upon the general question.

The following may be taken as a sketch of the general character of the popular assemblies of South America. When the party in possession

of the executive power had taken his measures in such a way as to have his assumption of authority legalized by calling together the people, and getting their vote in favour of his appointment to the office of Governor, President, Director, or Dictator, the next thing he set about was the election of Deputies, to form a Congress or Junta. The same spirit of intimidation and intrigue by which his popular election to the chief magistracy had been carried, was now put into active operation for the election of Deputies to the legislative assembly.

The result was generally what might have been anticipated;—that this assembly was composed of a majority favourable to his interests. For the purpose of presiding over the Congress, the most important man, and most in favour with the Governor elect, was chosen as a matter of course. Two Secretaries were named, and the course of debate was regulated by three or four of the better class of orators, confessedly, and uncompromisingly, supporters of the man in power.

Among the Deputies to Congress were generally to be found a few merchants and landed proprietors; but what head could these be ex-

pected to make against the multitude of doctors in law and doctors in theology? Little, indeed; and their debates and enactments were such as might naturally be expected from men who had just thrown off their collegiate gowns, or grown old in their collegiate prejudices. With a very limited knowledge of the world or of business, and not much read in history, except in that of Spain or of ancient Rome, they took the institutions of these as the groundwork of their legislation,—without reference to their own different political position,—means,—knowledge relatively to the rest of the world, or the susceptibility of their own countrymen to be governed according to such principles as to members of Congress appeared most sublime and beautiful in the theory of free constitutions. It was in this way that the great variety and number of constitutional codes in South America were drawn up. Every new Congress, almost, produced a new Constitution, which, at the very time that it provided for inviolability of persons and property,—liberty of the Press,—freedom of commerce with all nations, and strict responsibility of the executive,—was scarce promulgated before the gentle-

men who composed it were some of them in prison, and others banished;—the editors of the papers who had applauded it were obliged to change their tone; heavy duties, and often forced contributions, were levied to serve the exigencies of the moment; and the great man at the head of affairs for the time being was superseded by a greater one at the head of more troops. Loads of abuse were heaped upon the silenced or banished legislators;—everything criminal was charged upon the deposed Governor; but no trial of either one or the other, in a single instance to our knowledge, ever took place. New elections,—new debates,—new Constitutions,—but yet precisely the same order of things ensued.

The fact is, that most of these changes and struggles for power were simply illegal changes of administrations,—not “Revolutions,” as they were often hyperbolically called. And it may be remarked here, to the honour of the South Americans, that their civil discords,—even their civil wars,—have generally been of a bloodless character. The tendency was not to shed, but to spare blood. There are some unhappy instances

to the contrary ; but they are few, as compared with the many conflicts carried on since the overthrow of the Spanish power.

One great misfortune of South American legislation has been that the men engaged in it, instead of attending gradually and practically to the reformation, one after another, of the abuses which they inherited from Spain, and multiplied by their own misgovernment, have overlooked them as something too trifling and mean,—too near them,—so tangible as at any time to be susceptible of remedy.

Such plain and homely matters as these have been allowed to stand over,—pending the discussion of metaphysical questions of political and individual right ; of the comparative merits of a government based upon a principle of federation, and of one emanating from a common centre of legislative and executive power. The latter they styled a “*gobierno de unidad*”—“a government of unity”—as opposed to a “federal government.” ’Twere no easy task to follow those congresses through the amplitude of power with which they sometimes proposed to invest their own august body,—and the diminished authority with which they would entrust the executive ; to

endeavour to show how nicely they would balance the two, by means of a senate; or how scrupulously the criminal and civil judicature should be steered clear of all undue bias or control.

Questions like these were more analogous to the questions propounded for discussion after the manner of the schools, than those required for the slow and practical redress of the every day and growing abuses which prevailed.

Questions of the former kind had moreover this advantage:—that their decision did not imply the necessity of any corresponding executive regulation to give them effect. They were questions of *pure legislation*: and this was precisely what the legislators liked them for.

Some years ago, Mr. Ribadavia threw the whole interior provinces of the River Plate into a state of ferment and civil war, by a twelvemonth's discussion in congress, the object of which was to decide that Buenos Ayres should be a “*gobierno de unidad*.” The ambitious Ribadavia, who was to have been at the head of the central government, lost his federal presidency during the heat of the debate; and his antagonist (Colonel Dorrego) coming in soon after as governor of Buenos Ayres, the principles and privileges of

federal government in their greatest latitude were of course established.

The same Colonel Dorrego, after being governor for eighteen months, and while he was indeed yet governor, was shot by the "Unitarios," or Centralists, the men of Mr. Ribadavia's party, without form of trial, either legal or military. The country then fell, for a time, into the hands of the military chief Lavalle; by whose immediate orders the legal governor had been led to execution.

Mr. J. P. R. was in Lima in 1823, and present in Congress during a very heated discussion respecting religious toleration there. In the course of the debate a learned member (Luna Pizarro) opposed the measure by the following notable argument:—

"It has been urged," said he, "among the reasons which should induce us to pass a law for the toleration of other religious creeds, that, if we do not, the number of English residents among us will be greatly diminished, and consequently the trade which they bring to our shores. Now, I apprehend that the English come among us for one or both of two things,—either for our women, or our gold. With respect to our women, they

must either want to marry them, or to seduce them. If the former, it is against the principles of our holy religion, that Catholics should intermarry with heretics. If the latter, it involves an obvious corruption of our manners. Both of these things are to be provided against by legislative enactment; and since the only attraction, *then*, for the English will be our gold and silver, give them plenty of that; and I fearlessly prophesy that you will have no more complaints of the want of religious toleration. Who does not know that Buonaparte long ago called the English a nation of shopkeepers?" This appeared quite conclusive: the law for toleration was rejected; and the Reverend Luna Pizarro was two months afterwards busily employed in levying a forced contribution of two hundred thousand dollars (fifty thousand pounds) upon that part of Buonaparte's nation of shopkeepers, who as English merchants were then resident in Lima. To this unjust levy, the English, of course, refused to submit; and one and all demanded their passports to leave the country. The Government refused to grant them unless the contribution were first paid. Fortunately there was an English frigate (the *Aurora*), com-



manded by a distinguished officer on the station ; and he put a very practical stop to the theory of international law which the Peruvian Deputies wished to establish. Captain Prescott, insisting upon his countrymen's being permitted to embark, got his frigate under weigh in a few minutes after he found that calm remonstrance to this effect was unavailable ; and he stopped two vessels to our consignment from coming into harbour. As regards English ships, he blockaded, in short, the port of Callao ; and in two days he had a polite note from Government, offering to relinquish their claims to the contribution, and to give the English their passports to leave the country. Mr. J. P. R. was then called in by the President La Mar ; and the question was amicably settled by the negotiation with the Government of a local and voluntary loan.

Very shortly after this, and while the congress was yet engaged in such debates as these, the Spanish general, Canterac, came down upon Lima, chased the legislative body from their place of sitting, to the fortress of Callao ; where, in a few days more, the balls from his camp again disturbed them in a debate as to whether the

real governor of the country was the man whom themselves had elected, viz., the president Rivagüero, or General Sucre, sent from Columbia by Bolivar, to embroil parties, and foster petty jealousies. The congress decided in favour of Sucre; and the latter, as the first exercise of his authority, thinking heat of war and heat of debate too much, within the straitened precincts of a bombarded fortification, sent the members of congress off to a small town, called Truxillo. There they re-elected their former governor, Rivagüero; and, as a proof of his gratitude, he made twelve of them senators. But finding, on their return to Lima to support his authority, that the Old Spaniards had evacuated the place, and that a rival of Rivagüero, the Marquis of Torretagle, occupied in the mean time the presidential chair; both senators and members of congress thought better of it; they joined Torretagle; and, at their first sitting in congress, declared Rivagüero a traitor to his country. Mr. J. P. R. was present, a fortnight before, at a grand public dinner given by that functionary, at Truxillo, to these very men. Doctor Unanue, as president of the senate, was also there,—the

loudest in praise of Rivagüero at Truxillo, the first to condemn him on his (the Doctor's) return to Lima.

So were most of the early congresses of South America constituted. Of eloquence there was a good deal in them; of practical wisdom not much; and of public principle, alas! no great store. Although a now lengthened intercourse with foreigners, and dear-bought experience, have greatly improved them, it must still be confessed that they are an inefficient means of working out practical and every-day reforms: and yet it is for this purpose alone, at present, that they are wanted, in order to regulate the legislative, judicial, and executive government of the country.

There are, of course, shades of difference in the degrees of knowledge brought together, in the various sections of America, for legislative purposes. In Buenos Ayres, for instance, many valuable and judicious reforms passed the house of representatives during the administration of the very Mr. Ribadavia, whose political fortune was afterwards wrecked upon the rock of the "centralization" question. In Buenos Ayres,

too, there is more practical knowledge of business than in the other republics.

The congress of Peru is not yet prepared to grant religious toleration; that of Buenos Ayres has long ago passed it into a law, on liberal and enlightened terms. Generally speaking, it may be affirmed that those states which have had longest and most extended intercourse with foreigners, are the most practical in their legislative capacity.

The form of South American debate is this:—Members take their seats, having previously assembled in an ante-room, till a sufficient number is collected to constitute what is called a “sala,” and by us, “a house.” The government secretaries or ministers have their respective places, but no vote, in the house. The president or speaker sits at a table on a platform raised above the level of the room. There is a bell at his right hand, with which he tinkles to order. He has a secretary on either side of him; and one or two reporters are seated immediately under him. In some places the members speak in a sitting position, which, to an

Englishman, has an awkward effect. In other places they mount up into a "tribuno," or rostrum. By the former position the graces and vehemence of action are precluded ; and by the latter, not only does action become a mere studied display, but the notion of business is superseded by the expectancy of a formal oration. We cannot reconcile it to ourselves, in the one case, to see a man sitting and taking his snuff box out, during the heat of debate (himself being at once the snuffer and the speaker), any more than in the other we can feel ourselves warmed by the over-wrought rapidity of action of a mercurial spirit, or the measured solemnity of a grave one putting forth its ebullitions from a box, of which the sides are too high for elbow-room. South American members of parliament, in the exercise of a politeness not in use with ours, do not at once rise to speak, but preface all they have to say with a "pido la palabra;" that is, "I desire leave to speak." The president nods assent. His *eye* has been caught ; and the honourable member proceeds in a strain that, in accordance at first with the modesty of his appeal, rises by degrees into such rude charges and round asser-

tions against his opponents, as to draw from them, long before he has finished, loud and frequent interruptions, much denial of premises, and motioning of the hand and head, as if to say,—“You shall have an answer.” This impatience often proceeds so far, not on the part of the immediate opponent alone of the speaking member, but of all who take a different view of the case, that the president is obliged to tinkle many times the bell by which he calls the members to order before he can procure it; and no sooner is it procured than it is again interrupted.

There are frequent calls, during the heat of debate, to the “quarto intermedio,” or quarter of an hour’s rest; and few subjects, indeed, are ever deemed of interest enough to warrant a prolongation of the morning sitting, which ends at two o’clock P.M., or of the evening one, which closes at nine.

In an early congress of Buenos Ayres, some point was discussed of such unusual importance, that, at five o’clock in the afternoon, the sitting had not come to a close. At this hour, a worthy but rather gastronomic member rose and said:—“Gentlemen, I beg you to observe that, if we

thus prolong our debates beyond our regular dinner-hour, these political discussions will at last land us in our graves." He was cheered by all the old doctors present; and more regular hours were thenceforward observed. Mr. Brotherton would be a well-supported member in the Buenos Ayres House of Commons.

In this way debates are lengthened out for days and weeks. Part of the tactics, indeed, of members, is to gain by postponement and delay what they cannot obtain by reason or argument; as one juryman has been known to starve his eleven companions into a compliance with his view of the case. Seats are provided in the "sala" for the public; and occasionally public interest and curiosity are a good deal excited by what is going forward.

Going from the house of representatives to the house called the palace, formerly occupied by the viceroy, and now by the governor or president, we find the entrance to it guarded by a few black soldiers, not in the best habiliments. Proceeding to the ante-chamber, we find a solitary aide-de-camp, perhaps two, in attendance, with a candle burning for the double purpose of lighting

a cigar and sealing a letter. A simple announcement of your name generally procures admittance to his excellency, who sits in a sort of office or study, adjacent to the entrance-hall. A little affectation of state, in the manner of the governor, is observable; but none in the arrangement either of his chamber or dress; and patience, affability, and good breeding are almost always experienced, both from the governor and his secretaries, during the transaction of business with them. The exceptions to this rule are rare. Mr. Ribadavia, however, is a striking one. No man, upon state business, could see him, unless he went in silk stockings. One of the secretaries was generally required to introduce to him every one who aspired to approach his person. Even the mechanic, who was employed to make for him a sofa or a chest of drawers, was not exempted from this ceremony. The president considered it a condescension incompatible with the gravity and dignity of his office, to ask his most intimate acquaintance to take snuff, though himself a perpetual snuffer; and he was greatly puzzled by the necessity under which he was sometimes laid, in spite of his predilection for



aristocratic distinction, of asking a man "to sit down." He preferred rising up himself, as a timely admonition to any one admitted to an audience, not to take a chair; which else, the politeness of all his predecessors, and the general ease and affability of manners in the country, would have led the person introduced mechanically to do.

The government offices are badly organized for business and despatch, generally; but a person having court influence, or being known to the secretaries, especially if intimate with the governor, finds all difficulties smoothed, and ordinary obstacles quickly overcome.

To attempt to define the nature and extent of the power of the executive in these countries, would not only be difficult, but impossible. One day you find the governor shooting a man upon his own responsibility, and the next, applying to congress for leave to celebrate high mass, or increase the salary of a clerk in the government offices. A few days after this, he perhaps dissolves the congress altogether.

The extent of naval and military force at the disposal of the different governments of South

America varies, according to a variety of circumstances. Peru may keep under arms, in ordinary times, five or six thousand men. Chile may maintain about three or four thousand; and Buenos Ayres four or five. Paraguay keeps about three thousand; and the east side of the River Plate, or Banda Oriental, will support a similar number. The force of Mexico is about eight thousand men, and of Columbia six or seven. These troops are partly cavalry, partly infantry. There are large trains of artillery in the country, though not many practised artillerymen. They have abundance of arms and ammunition of all kinds: and could, in each of the provinces, in case of emergency, call into the field a large body of militia and guerilla troops, chiefly mounted.

On occasion of General Rosas' final triumph over the "Unitario," or central party of Buenos Ayres, he ordered his mounted force to march through the town. The procession was seen by Mr. W. P. R., and persons around him counted about *six thousand* as good cavalry as could well take the field. It was a motley group as regards uniform; but for *men and horses*, it was,

beyond all doubt, a most efficient corps. The chacareros, to a man, were in this force, and Rosas had not 500 infantry to co-operate with his 6000 cavalry. This disparagement shows how greatly the latter, in such a country as the plain open Pampas, covered with pasture, and teeming with cattle, is superior to the former.

The naval power of *all* the republics mentioned is quite in its infancy. Peru has a couple of frigates, in bad repair, and five or six smaller vessels. Chile has a corvette and a few schooners. Buenos Ayres has some merchant-ships armed as vessels of war, and a small flotilla of schooners and gun-boats. Even these are generally falling into a state of decay.

The safety of South America, therefore, lies more in her distance from Europe, and in the absence of any military and naval effort that can possibly be made against her by Spain, than in her means of positive resistance. A first conquest of the principal towns would be comparatively easy; but the keeping of such conquest, at the cost of constant supplies from Europe, would be an expensive, if not impossible, undertaking. The immense extent of uncultivated territory in-

tervening between each town; the facility of subsistence afforded to the natives in the interior, by means of the cattle which they can drive before them; and the desultory, marauding system of warfare, which, without ever coming to general engagements, they can keep up for years, would sooner or later tire out the patience, or exhaust the resources, of any regular and expensive equipment of force sent against them.

The country might be desolated, the inhabitants chased into the woods, and plains, and villages of the interior; but it would be a difficult and tedious thing to make a permanent conquest of the country:—a thing impossible for Spain to do, and not likely to be attempted by any other European power. South America, in a natural, as well as military point of view, therefore, from the impotence of her only natural enemy, Old Spain; from the jealousy with which North America will naturally view any invasion from Europe; from the tacit consent by which the powers there seem to have imposed upon each other a veto against aggression; and from her own means of defence, may be said to be absolutely and irrevocably independent of every other country.

What Buenos Ayres wants, and, in common with it, every town and province of South America, next to population, are men of real political integrity, and some moderate knowledge of the business of life, as conducted in more civilized countries, to give impulse and direction to public affairs. There is also still wanted among the South Americans, even were there men of this description to direct them, a patient and increasing tact in the application of this political knowledge to the circumstances of the country. There is much ignorance to combat ; there are many prejudices to undermine ; jealousy is constantly on the alert, and ready to sound the alarm, when any man steps forward in support of what is really liberal in principle, extended in view, or beneficial to the community at large. Party spirit, in short, is the bane of the country. There have been so many pretenders to upright motives of action, while their undertakings have been fraught with sordid and selfish views ; the affectation of public good has been so often the avowed and professed object, while the real one has been the advancement of private interest by public spoliation, that we must not wonder at the

distrust of public men which pervades the community, and opposes often an uncompromising resistance to attempted innovation of even the most beneficial kind.

It is well worthy of remark, with reference to the settlement of foreigners in South America, that during the whole course of revolution, disturbance, and insecurity, by which the inhabitants themselves have been agitated, and the fortunes of so many of them ruined, there has yet been a general deference shown to the persons and property, not of British subjects only, but of those of every other nation. Englishmen, from a variety of causes, take, *as* foreigners, decidedly the lead in South America.

The natives are a frank and warm-hearted people ; and the blunt manners and honest principles of John Bull have always had charms for them. They commingle as if of one nation. The English have never taken any farther part in the political dissensions of the country than that of affording, indiscriminately, an asylum to the chiefs and adherents of all sides, when in personal danger ; and this even-handed humanity has won much upon the inhabitants at large.

The English have been longest in the country; their numbers preponderate over those of other foreigners; and their trade is by far the most extensive and advantageous which the natives enjoy.

The British residents are respected generally for the integrity of their dealings. They have extensive mercantile transactions with the creoles; many Englishmen have married native women; and being now recognised as the subjects of a nation with which treaties of commerce have been entered into, and by which representatives are kept at the different seats of government, they have all the freedom and protection necessary for the management of their affairs.

They are of course liable to be affected by some of the unwise, and often arbitrary regulations bearing upon the inhabitants of the country at large, in matters of trade and commerce; and these regulations are frequently prejudicial to foreign interests, because framed upon views of expediency, upon want of sound principle, or upon very dubious and short-sighted policy.

But as long experience has now taught foreigners that these are evils inseparable from

the very nature of the yet unsettled condition, and vacillating institutions of a new country like South America ; as they may readily infer, from the past, what is likely, for a length of time, to occur in future ; those who form establishments there, of course do so with a full knowledge of both sides of the question. Anomalous and unwise enactments affecting the whole community, native and foreign, are, in all parts of the continent, of still frequent occurrence ; but there can be no doubt that every year's free intercourse with other nations will tend to diminish these and other abuses, and to augment the permanent benefits held out by South America to British enterprise.

Yours, &c.

THE AUTHORS.

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## LETTER VI.

To J—— G——, Esq.

NO LONGER INTRODUCTORY.

Retrospective Glance—Comparison between North and South America—Plan of the Work—Capture of Buenos Ayres—Anticipated Results—Consequences of the Capture—Embarkation for the River Plate—Arrival there—Bombardment of Montevideo—Capture of the Town—Symptoms of Confidence in the People—Motley Inhabitants—Expectations excited.

*London, 1838.*

WE have given you, in the preceding letters, a synopsis of the manner in which Spanish America withdrew itself from under the yoke of the mother-country. We have attempted to detect, also, the elements of that long-continued political confusion and civil strife which have hampered the energies, wasted the resources, and misguided the aims of the natives of South America. In pointing out the causes which have chiefly impeded their political regeneration, we have been constrained to trace them to the many

feuds fostered for the promotion of the personal views and ambitious projects of individuals who have sought their own aggrandisement at the expense of the public weal ; but we have, at the same time, in justice to the Americans, shown that this was not only a natural, but almost a necessary consequence of the system of corrupt government and narrow policy, left as an heirloom (if we may use the expression) by the bigoted mother-country to her oppressed offspring in the colonies. Would North America be what she now is, if the great family of *her* United States, after outgrowing the control of the parent one, had unfurled against her the standard of opposition under circumstances similarly disadvantageous to those which beset the South Americans? Certainly not. There were, and there still are, in Spanish South America, few elements for the formation of such characters as those of either a Washington or a Franklin. And if there were to be found such characters, on what different national materials, in regard to education, science, knowledge of the arts of life, political enfranchisement, and physical wealth and strength, would they not have to operate!

Let those who know South America best, decide whether Washington, the able and patriotic general, or Franklin, the enlightened philosopher, and acute diplomatist, could by possibility have played their great respective parts on the stage of a country, which for three hundred years had been hermetically sealed up by Old Spain against the whole world; which had languished under the corruption of vice-regal authority, and the pernicious sway of monastic influence; which had been the theatre, in short, of a system of jealousy and espionage, ever on the alarm lest a dominion of such almost unbounded extent should rise up in arms against the feeble power of the country that swayed it. For our own part, we consider that the thing would have been impracticable; and that it is only fair to allow, in extenuation of the undeniable obliquities and miscarriages of the South Americans, that to the ill-starred maxims and practice of government under which they so long languished, are traceable most of their aberrations.

In accordance with the plan which we have

resolved to adopt, of combining our personal history and narrative with the events of which we have been respectively witnesses, and with many of the scenes in which we have been individually actors, I now proceed to give you my own account of that which it pertains to me personally to record.

For this purpose, I must carry you back to some of the incidents of my early life. As these proceed, you will find them corroborative, in detail, of the general sketch of South American affairs already given. As regards particularly Paraguay, you will find them illustrative of one of the most singular revolutions that ever, on a small scale, and under the name of liberty and independence, was effected in any community. You will see the Dictator Francia blighting the energies of one of the finest countries in the world. You will see his despotic will changing, abrogating, or destroying all beneficial laws; and you will behold his relentless frown hushing into silence, not only the expression of complaint, but of thought, on the part of his paralysed and terror-stricken countrymen. You will see a

simple, fine, confiding people, that had been comparatively happy under the *régime* of Old Spain, reduced to wretchedness and imbecility, under the iron rule of one who has yet the audacity to style himself a "patriot."

In order systematically to trace to you the steps by which I arrived at intimacy with this singular man, and the precipitate process by which I was driven from his presence, I must shortly detain you over a few of my adventures between 1806, when, at the age of fourteen, I first left this country, and 1812, when I became personally acquainted with the Dictator.

In 1805-6, news reached England of the expedition to which we have already referred, under Viscount Beresford, having sailed up the River Plate, and most valiantly attacked and taken the town of Buenos Ayres.

The victory, however surprising in itself, was as nothing, compared with the results anticipated from it by this country. The people were represented as not only satisfied with their conquerors, but as tractable, amiable, lively, and engaging. The River Plate, discharging itself into the sea by a mouth nearly 150 miles wide, and navigable

for 2000 miles into the interior of the country, was described as a mighty inlet to the millions of our commerce. Peru and her mines were held forth to us as open through this channel: we were told that the tropical regions of Paraguay were approachable by ships; that thousands upon thousands of cattle were grazing in the verdant plains; and that the price of a bullock was four shillings, while that of a horse was half the sum. The natives, it was said, would give uncounted gold for our manufactures, while their warehouses were as well stocked with produce, as their coffers filled with the precious metals. The women were said to be all beautiful, and the men all handsome, and athletic.

Such was the description received here of the New Arcadia, of which Lord Beresford had achieved the most incredible conquest.

British commerce, ever on the wing for foreign lands, soon unfurled the sails of her floating ships for South America. The rich, the poor, the needy, the speculative, and the ambitious, all looked to the making or mending of their fortunes in those favoured regions. Government was busy equipping, for the extension and

security of the newly-acquired territory, and for the protection of her subjects and their property, a second expedition, under the command of Sir Samuel Auchmuty.

Like other ardent young men, I became anxious to visit a land described in such glowing colours. I sailed accordingly from Greenock, in December, 1806, in a fine ship called the *Enterprise*, commanded by Captain Graham.

The monotony of a sea-voyage is so well understood, that I shall pass over mine in very few words. We had the usual winter storms in the Channel: the ever-paid penalty of a tossing in the Bay of Biscay: sultry weather in crossing the line, and great rejoicings when, after three months of pure sea and sky, we got soundings at the mouth of the River Plate. As we gaily sped our course in now inland waters, and hoped next day to take up our domicile in Buenos Ayres, we were hailed by a British ship of war; and alas for the dissipation of the golden dreams which we had been dreaming all the passage out!

Captain Graham, having been ordered on board of the frigate, returned with dismay depicted in

his countenance, to tell us that the Spaniards had regained possession of Buenos Ayres, and made the gallant General Beresford and his army prisoners.

Our captain next informed us, that the second expedition, under Sir Samuel Auchmuty, was now investing Montevideo, and that, with the exception of the country immediately around the town, there was no footing for British subjects on the whole continent of Spanish America. We were ordered to proceed to the roadstead of the besieged city, and there to place ourselves under the orders of the English admiral.

Down at one fell swoop tumbled all the castles in the air which had been built to a fantastic height by the large group of passengers on board of the *Enterprise*. Those who had yesterday shaken hands, in mutual congratulation upon the fortunes they were to make, walked up and down the deck to-day under evident symptoms of despondency and gloom.

We soon took our station off Montevideo among hundreds of ships similarly situated with our own. We were within hearing of the cannon's roar, and within sight of the batteries that



were pouring their deadly shot and shell into the houses of the affrighted inhabitants.

Montevideo is a town strongly and regularly fortified. In the harbour, busy boats were to be seen plying from ship to ship; brigs of war were running close under the walls, and bombarding the citadel from the sea; the guns were levelled with deadly aim at the part of the fortification selected for the breach; and the mortar was discharging, in fatal curve, the destructive bomb. Thousands of spectators from the ships were tracing, in breathless anxiety, the impression made by every shell upon the town, and every ball upon the breach. The frequent *sorties* made by the Spanish troops, and repulses invariably sustained by them, gave an animating, but nervous interest to the scene.

One morning, at length, before the dawn of day, that part of the wall, in which was the "imminent deadly breach," was enveloped, as seen from the shipping, in one mighty spread of conflagration. The roaring of cannon was incessant, and the atmosphere was one dense mass of smoke impregnated with the smell of gunpowder. We perceived, by aid of the night-glass, and

of the luminous flashes from the guns, that a deadly struggle was going forward on the walls. Anon there was an awful pause, a deep and solemn gloom. The work of carnage was drawing to a close ; and presently the dawn of day exhibited to us the British ensign unfurled, and proudly floating upon the battlements. A simultaneous shout of triumph burst from the whole fleet ; and thousands who had been yesterday held in suspense between doubt and fear, gave once more unbounded scope to a sanguine anticipation of the happy and prosperous result of their enterprise.

We landed that day, and found our troops in complete possession of the place. What a spectacle of desolation and woe presented itself to our eyes at every step ! The carnage had been terrible, in proportion to the bravery displayed by the Spaniards, and to the gallant, irresistible daring by which their masses were overwhelmed, and their guns silenced by the English.

First, the grenadier company of the 40th, acting as the forlorn hope, missed the breach, and with the exception of Captain Gillies, and a few men, was completely destroyed by the guns which

flanked it. Then followed the brave Colonel Vassall at the head of the 38th regiment. He discovered the breach, mounted to the top of it, and while waving his sword, and encouraging his men to the onset, he was shot to the heart. An awful conflict ensued. The breach was barricaded repeatedly with piles of tallow in skins, and with bullocks' hides. These, as they gave way, hurled our soldiers with them, and upon them, into the town, where they were received at the bayonet's point by the besieged. Again, as fresh columns marched up, without the walls, to reinforce those that were scaling the breach, or on the battlements, and as these followed the party that had first got into the town, the carnage on both sides was dreadful, and uninterrupted. Piles of wounded, of dead and dying, were to be seen on every hand; and at every turn we met litters conveying the sufferers to the various hospitals and churches. You might here see the wretched sister looking in despair for her brother, and there the bereaved widow for her husband. Having ascertained that they were not among the living, they sought to be-

stow upon them, in decent solemnity, the last office required on this side of the grave by the dead.

A mere *field* of action cannot have half the horrors of an action in a town which is taken by assault. In the latter case, the conjugal chamber and the family circle are alike exposed to violation; the nearest relatives, the dearest friends, are severed by the sword of death from each other, in the *presence* of each other; while, to add to the horror of the scene, lust, pillage, and inebriety hold uncontrollable sway over the flushed hearts of the victors. Such scenes, though they could not be wholly repressed, were, in the capture of Montevideo, comparatively few: and this mitigation of the general consequences of a town being taken, after obstinate resistance, by assault, was owing not less to the admirable discipline of the British troops, than to the united energy and philanthropy of Sir Samuel Auchmuty.

In a week or two, the more prominent ravages of war disappeared, and in a month after the capture, the inhabitants were getting as much confidence in their invaders, as could possibly be

expected in the altered relative position in which they stood to each other.

This early confidence was mainly attributable to the mind and equitable government of the commander-in-chief. He permitted the civil institutions of the country to remain unchanged, and conducted himself with the greatest affability to all classes of the inhabitants.

These began gradually to exchange civilities with the English; and when I considered not only the hostile manner in which they came upon them, but the difference of religious creed which often engenders passions more deadly than those produced by war itself, it was impossible to withhold from the Spaniards the praise of having sacrificed to outward decorum, the festering feelings which they *must* have entertained, of humbled pride, and thwarted hope.

How all the foreign troops, merchants, and adventurers of every description got accommodation in the town, it is not easy to say. They located themselves in every nook and corner of it; so that it soon had more the appearance of an English colony than of a Spanish settlement.

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The number of inhabitants, at the time of its capture, was about ten thousand : a mixed breed of the natives of Old Spain, of the offspring of these, called creoles, and of a proportionably large mixture of blacks and mulattoes, mostly slaves. To this population there was an accession, on the capture of the town, of about six thousand English subjects, of whom four thousand were military, two thousand merchants, traders, adventurers ; and a dubious crew which could scarcely pass muster, even under the latter designation.

Hundreds of British ships were lying in the harbour. Buenos Ayres was still in possession of the Spaniards ; but confident hopes were entertained that, when it should be heard at home that Montevideo was taken, a force would be sent out sufficient for the capture of the capital of so magnificent a country. You may guess with what anxiety we all looked forward to such a consummation ; and with what elated hope we anticipated that the treasures of the towns, and the flocks and herds of the plains, were soon to come into our possession. We expected also

that in a few months the countries of Chile, Peru, and Paraguay would be thrown open to our unbounded commerce.

In my next letter I shall speak more at large of the natives, and especially of a very admirable part of them,—the women. I never saw any females more graceful or pretty than they are. One might apply to almost every one of them the quotation from Milton:

“Grace was in all her steps, heav’n in her eye,  
In ev’ry gesture dignity and love.”

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

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## LETTER VII.

To J—— G——, Esq.

Society of Montevideo—The Rats—The two Spies—Sir Samuel Auchmuty.

*London, 1838.*

I HAD now, at Montevideo (1807), entered upon the bustle of active life. During our voyage, I made myself pretty well master of the principles of the Spanish language; and by hourly intercourse with the natives of Montevideo, I soon acquired tolerable fluency in speaking it. As this facility increased, I naturally drew off from the society of my own countrymen, that I might commingle more with the Spaniards. Though in an enemy's country, and a fortified town,—under martial law withal,—hostility of feeling between the natives and the English was so far subsiding, that some of the principal families of the place recommenced their tertulias.

I was invited to many of these evening parties;



and found them an entertaining *mélange* of music, dancing, coffee-drinking, card-playing, laughter, and conversation. While the young parties were waltzing and courting in the middle of the room, the old ones, seated in a row, upon what is called the *estrada*, were chatting away with all the *esprit* and vivacity of youth. The *estrada* is a part of the floor raised at one end of the room, covered with fine straw mats in summer, and with rich and beautiful skins in winter.

The gentlemen were grouped in different parts of the room, some at cards, some talking, others joking with the ladies; while the more youthful part of them were alternately seated by the piano, in admiration of the singer, or tripping it on the fantastic toe with very graceful partners. Every step, and figure, and pirouette, appeared to me charming. Every lady that I saw in Montevideo, waltzed and moved through the intricate, yet elegant mazes of the country dance with grace inimitable, because the result of natural ease and refinement. Then they were so kind in their endeavours to correct the little blunders in Spanish of foreigners, without laughing at them, that they taught by example, at once good feel-

ing, and good manners. There is no ceremony whatever at the tertulia. Having once got an invitation to the house ("Señor Don Juan," for instance, "esta es su casa," "this is your house"); I could visit and leave it at all hours of the day, and just as it suited myself. At the evening parties which I have described, persons once invited came in with a simple salutation to the lady of the house, and departed in the same way. The opportunity thus afforded of admiring the personal attractions, the fluency of discourse, and the ease of manner of the females, I did not fail to cultivate; while I could not but be pleased with the hospitality which, at the hands of the other sex, I everywhere experienced. I thought it quite surprising, when I considered that the English were their enemies, and recent conquerors. Much of the kindness I received, was no doubt traceable to my youth, and to the anxiety I evinced to become acquainted with their language, and to assimilate myself to their manners and their habits.

The parties of which I speak broke up very early, as no Spaniard was allowed to be out after eight o'clock; and even Englishmen, after that

hour, were obliged to give the countersign before they were permitted to pass the numerous sentinels posted in the streets.

I found all my preconceived notions of the gravity and austerity of the Spaniards quite overthrown. We have formed our estimate of them, I think, more from legends and romances of by-gone times, than from a real observation of their character at the present day. There is much of urbanity and kindness in it, with no small tincture of humour ; and I can by no means agree in thinking that it is in any way marked with that gloomy hauteur and inherent reserve which we have been led to believe are its distinctive qualities.

The only drawback upon the delightful way in which I now spent my evenings, was the necessity of returning home through long narrow streets so infested with voracious rats as to make it perilous sometimes to face them. There was no police in the town, except that provided by the showers of rain, which, at intervals, carried off the heaps of filth from the streets. Around the offals of carrion, vegetables, and stale fruit, which in huge masses accumulated there, the rats absolutely

mustered in legions. If I attempted to pass near those formidable banditti, or to interrupt their meals or orgies, they gnashed their teeth upon me like so many evening wolves. So far were they from running in affright to their numerous burrows, that they turned round, set up a raven cry, and rushed at my legs in a way to make my blood run chill. Between them and myself many a hazardous affray occurred; and though sometimes I fought my way straight home with my stick, at others I was forced to fly down some cross and narrow path or street, leaving the rats undisputed masters of the field.

A sad interruption to our tertulias occurred about this time. Two spies were taken, on whom papers were found, clearly showing that a conspiracy was hatching, and that it was fostered by the inhabitants of Montevideo, and upheld by the military of Buenos Ayres.

Its object was to retake, be the havoc and the waste of blood what they might, Montevideo from the English. It was arranged that a large body of troops, crossing over in the night from Buenos Ayres to the opposite town (Colonia), should march thence upon Montevideo, and be

admitted by the conspirators there, at one or more of the gates. The scheme was frustrated by its early detection ; but I believe the best plans which the Spaniards could have concocted for the attainment of the object they had in view would have been rendered abortive by the vigilance of our outposts, as well as by the admirable regulations of the garrison, and watchfulness of the Commander in Chief.

That the contemplated insurrection was crudely conceived and clumsily managed, was evident ; but of the *existence* of such a conspiracy no doubt could be entertained. Many Spaniards were arrested ; a general gloom overspread the inhabitants ; and a distrust of their conquerors, which had been fast disappearing, grew up anew, as a necessary consequence of the conscious delinquency and fear of punishment on the part of the Spaniards.

The Commander in Chief determined on the execution of the two spies alone, who had been taken *in flagrante delicto*. For this purpose a high gallows was erected in the great square, or " Plaza Mayor." The countenance of every Englishman you passed indicated alarm and

suspicion, and that of every Spaniard fear and dismay. In order to give the greater solemnity to the execution, all the troops of the garrison were marched from their quarters to the appointed spot. The other English inhabitants were also crowding thither; and such of the Spaniards as were not dismayed by the occurrence, wrapped in their cloaks or capotes, were likewise hastening to the solemn scene. The windows were crowded with trembling, yet curious female spectators: while half a dozen friars, in white habits, with black or red crosses on them, and carrying salvers in their hands, paraded the streets, and solicited in a doleful chant an alms to enable them to bury the culprits, and sing masses for their souls. The bells of the numerous churches and convents tolled for the dead; every shop was shut, and a general gloom pervaded the town.

Brought forth at length from prison, the two spies were placed on hurdles drawn by asses, and moved forward in procession, accompanied by numerous priests wailing and chanting, and exhorting the unhappy men. The great square was completely lined by the military; yet so

intense was the anxiety, so hushed was every noise, that you could distinguish, from the remotest corner, at once the articulation of the ghostly comforters, and the groans of the destined victims.

When all was ready, they mounted by a ladder to the platform on which they were to bid farewell to time. The ropes were adjusted round their necks,—the caps were drawn over their eyes,—the last loud ejaculation proceeded from the mouth of the priest, and the fatal handkerchiefs dropped from their hands as the signal for death. They died *not* ; a pardon was in the hands of the officer who superintended the ceremony at the scaffold. Awful as the scene had been up to that moment, it now became truly sublime. The bewildered, almost senseless men were taken down, but so far overpowered as to be unable to move a limb. They were carried on chairs and restored to their friends and families. In common with thousands of their countrymen, they blessed the English General, and showed their gratitude for his act of well-timed and most judicious clemency, by a quiet deference and respectful submission thenceforward to his government.

The gentleman at whose house I chiefly visited was M. Godefroy. He was one of the first personages of Montevideo. Himself a native of France, he had married a Montevideo lady of great personal attractions, and, surrounded by a fine family, his house was one of the most agreeable in the place.

I went to my tertulia there that evening, as usual, and I found all hearts expanded with gratitude to Sir Samuel Auchmuty for his clemency towards the unfortunate spies. A feeling of mutual kindness and confidence indeed, equally agreeable to the conquerors and the conquered, was engendered by an event which at first seemed calculated to lead to the very opposite results.

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

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## LETTER VIII.

To J—— G——, Esq.

News of General Whitelock's Expedition—English Militia—  
Whitelock's arrival—He sails for Buenos Ayres—Inauspicious March from Ensenada—Panic of the Buenos Ayres Army—Whitelock's Defeat.

*London, 1838.*

ABOUT the time at which the events recorded in my last letter took place, official accounts were received from England that a formidable expedition was fitting out for the River Plate; that General Whitelock was to be the commander of it; that its arrival might be looked for in a month; and that it was immediately to proceed up the river, and take possession of Buenos Ayres.

When it became known at Montevideo that most of the regular force of the garrison would be required to co-operate in the intended attack on the capital, the English merchants and subjects of every description were called upon to embody themselves into a corps of militia. In

the absence of the greater part of the regular troops, the newly-raised corps was to keep guard, and co-operate with the two battalions of the line which were to be left to garrison the place.

It was very curious,—quite a sight,—to witness the drilling of this awkward squad of militia.

I made a point of being often present when, under the directions of a dozen drill-serjeants, this loyal but mal-adroit body of men essayed to go through their military evolutions. I could not but congratulate myself on having escaped, on the score of youth, enlistment and exercise with such a group of recruits. With every respect for the character of British merchants and manufacturers, I was constrained to allow that military honours sat very awkwardly upon them.

Here was a Paisley weaver converted into a saucy serjeant, and there a Glasgow manufacturer manufactured into a full-grown lieutenant. The merchant was generally made a captain, while his head clerk strutted forth a corporal under him.

Many and great were the jealousies which pervaded this *corps d'armée*. The independent tradesman thought he had a better right to be

a serjeant, than an understrapper of a clerk ; but the clerk wrote the better hand, and could keep the accounts of his company, wherefore the tradesman was generally nonsuited. Many were the instances of bitter enmity engendered because one man was made a captain, while another, thinking he had equal or superior claims, was, by some capricious partiality, constrained to serve under him with a halberd.

The regiment was commanded by Colonel Tyrrell, collector of the customs, who united thus in his own person what people said was incompatible with the principles of our free constitution, viz., the control at once of the army and of the purse. In the ardour of his attention to the discipline of his corps, Colonel Tyrrell fell under great obloquy and suspicion from the loss somehow, of the custom-house books. The uniform of the militia body was a red jacket, blue trousers and red facings, and a tupée cap. I could not but feel amused as I contrasted the dexterity with which the same man handled a yard during one part of the day, and the awkwardness with which he "shouldered arms" at another. The first merchants seemed quite at home as

they sold a box of calicoes, but quite àt sea when, under the prop of a leathern stock, the military honours of the epaulette, the gorget, and the sword, they abandoned their warehouses to figure at parade. You could recognise the difference of caste and contour between them and the officers of the line at the distance of cannon range.

At length, Whitelock arrived, with a gorgeous suite of aides-de-camp, adjutants, commissaries, and other officers of a military cortège. Sir Samuel Auchmuty was not only superseded in his command, but eclipsed in his establishment by the now absolute General. He brought with him eight thousand men, the flower of the British army, conveyed in a large fleet of transports, protected by noble ships of war. He established a magnificent military court at the government-house, and magniloquently declared that he would instantly proceed against Buenos Ayres, and either take or level it with the ground, within a month from the time of his departure from Montevideo. We all hoped that the capital might be taken, for we could not see what we should gain by its being destroyed.

Whitelock ordered three thousand men of the

Montevideo garrison to follow him. Colonel Brown of the 40th regiment was left in command there; and the merchants were told once more that within a month they should be at liberty to proceed to Buenos Ayres. The new General had the reputation of being a haughty and reserved man; but it was hoped, notwithstanding, that he would prove himself equal to the fulfilment of the high duties to which he had been appointed by the Duke of York.

Shortly afterwards, General Whitelock sailed with an army of which any commander might well have been proud, and with a fleet in every way well provisioned and equipped. To the eight thousand men lately arrived, there were added three thousand of the veteran troops which had taken Montevideo. Sir Samuel Auchmuty, Colonel Pack, General Gower, General Crawford, and many other brave and distinguished officers, were under General Whitelock's command; and as the place had been taken not many months before by General Beresford with fifteen hundred men, there was not a shadow of doubt entertained of its at once surrendering to General Whitelock at the head of eleven thousand.

You may conceive with what exhilarated spirits and elated hopes everybody began to pack up for Buenos Ayres. The ships all bent their sails; the merchants all gave up their premises in Montevideo; and this town, like a house when the inhabitants are quitting it, had already quite a comfortless and deserted appearance. For myself, however, I scarcely knew whether to rejoice at my intended departure, or bewail it.

I was getting so entirely at home at M. Godofroy's, that I began to fear I might "go farther and fare worse." I conned over the old and homely proverb, that "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush;"—which the Spaniards render, by-the-by, more poetically than we do, by "*Mas vale pajaros en mano, que buytre volando:*" "better a little bird in the hand, than a vulture on the wing."

Shortly after the sailing of the expedition, a brig of war arrived from the scene of action, and brought intelligence of a landing having been effected by the British army at Ensenada. This place is distant from Buenos Ayres about thirty-six miles; and from it (Ensenada) the formidable force of General Whitelock immediately began

its march. The landing at such a spot struck everybody, acquainted with the *local*, as rather an inauspicious commencement of operations. Military men said, that in the first place there was no necessity for it; and that a landing might have been effected as well within five miles as fifty of Buenos Ayres, seeing there was no regular force that could have impeded such landing with any hope or chance of success.

In the second place, Ensenada being situated in low, marshy ground, there were interposed between it and Buenos Ayres immense bogs and lakes. Through these the army had inevitably to march in order to reach the capital.

Lastly, no communication could be kept up, on this line of march, between the naval and land forces; so that the army had to encumber itself, in addition to its heavy baggage and artillery train, with the immense load of provisions necessary for the subsistence of eleven thousand men during a march of six or eight days.

At length the expected despatches arrived; and I could scarcely credit the account which my eyes saw and ears heard, and that now my pen is

constrained to record, of the total defeat of General Whitelock's expedition. Onward it marched from the ill-fated Ensenada. Lakes, marshes, hunger, thirst, weariness, cold and fatigue, while they subjected the gallant army of an infatuated chief to almost every privation which the human frame could endure, opposed no effectual barrier against the order to advance. For hours together were the men up to their middle in water; their provisions were both wet and scanty; their heavy artillery was often swamped in the marshes; the cold was intense; shelter there was none; an ill-arranged commissariat left the men with an insufficient supply of wine and spirits to minister alleviation to their unprecedented fatigue; the horses on the route of march were driven away; the cattle too; not an inhabitant was to be found; and only here and there, at intervals of five and six miles, a wretched hut, abandoned by its yet more wretched owners, was to be seen. Still the British army, led on and encouraged by officers who might well be classed as the bravest of the brave, hied onward; and in a few days it arrived within four miles of the destined scene of operations.



At this time the regular troops and militia of Buenos Ayres marched out, in the direction of a small river, the Riachuelo, which they crossed at a bridge called the Puente de Baracas, that is, the Bridge of Hide-warehouses.

No sooner, however, did those men see the brigades and columns of the British army, and the train of its artillery moving towards them in dense and unbroken masses, than they scampered off in precipitate flight, not only *to* the town, but *through* the town, leaving it for a whole day literally defenceless. Had the English general *marched on*, he would have taken Buenos Ayres without firing a gun or losing a man.

A complete panic seemed to have seized the Spanish troops at sight of our red-coats; and all the efforts of their brave commander, the Viceroy Liniers, were ineffectual to regulate their retreat, or, more properly speaking, to stay their flight.

But General Whitelock did *not* march on: he made an ominous, a most unintelligible, and ruinous halt; and to this halt, not less than to his subsequent mode of attack upon the town, is to be attributed the defeat of his brave army;

the loss of nearly three thousand of the most intrepid of his men; the abandonment of Buenos Ayres; the restitution to Spain of Montevideo; and such disgrace to gallant soldiers, as could only have been brought upon them by a general the most inert, self-willed, capricious,—combining, withal, the apparently opposite qualities of rashness and cowardice,—that ever took the field.

When Colonel Brown communicated to the English residents at Montevideo the disastrous results of General Whitelock's short campaign, a tear stood in his manly eye; and when he informed us that the capitulation by which the English army was to be "permitted" to evacuate Buenos Ayres, contained also a clause for the abandonment, within two months, of Montevideo, the soldier could proceed no farther. He quitted, in the greatest agitation, the room in which he had been compelled to announce at once the defeat and humiliation of the brave army of which he was himself one of the brightest ornaments.

In my next letter, you shall have a few of the

details by which this unlooked-for catastrophe was brought upon us; sending us all, as a necessary result, to that point which, when our countrymen have once left home, they so generally dislike,—“back again.”

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

*John Whitelock 1757-1837 was Count. Marchmont in 1808 + dismissed from service. Encyclopedia 13. 11th edition vol 22 page 666.*

## LETTER IX.

To J—— G——, Esq.

Causes of the defeat at Buenos Ayres—The Capitulation—  
General Whitelock's callousness—Departure of the English  
from the Country—Transition from Land to Sea—Reflec-  
tions.

*London, 1838.*

GENERAL WHITELOCK, then, made his ill-fated halt at a distance of little more than three miles from Buenos Ayres. This not only induced the people to think that he was afraid to attack them, but it afforded time to the panic-stricken army of General Liniers to rally, and return to the town.

They cut fosses across the different streets by which they anticipated the British troops would enter; and the houses, being flat-roofed, low, and having a parapet-wall built all round them, served the Spaniards as so many batteries from

which, in comparative safety, they could fire down upon the dense columns of their enemies, as they marched through the narrow streets. The roofs of these houses, or, as they may rather be called, castles, were lined with soldiers, militia, volunteers, private citizens, servants, and slaves.

Every man that could handle and fire a musket was obliged to take part in the defence of the town. There were no military evolutions required: no discipline was necessary beyond that which each master of a family could easily command from his own household. These simple preparations made, the now resolute and almost enthusiastic inhabitants and military awaited the approach of the enemy.

There were three modes in which Buenos Ayres might have been taken, and, according to the opinion of all military men, *must* have been taken, had any one of them been adopted. First, the town might have been regularly invested, and starved into a capitulation; for there were not provisions for more than six weeks within it. Secondly, it might have been bombarded from two points, the Alto and the Retiro,

or bull-ring, which command the whole town. Thirdly, the town might have been taken by regular storm, had the troops been ordered to clear the house-tops, as they advanced, of the masses there collected to resist them.

There was *one* plan also, by the adoption of which the army might at once be massacred and defeated; and that was the plan on which it pleased the infatuated Whitelock to fix.

Buenos Ayres is a very large town, of which the streets intersect each other at right angles, some of them being more than three miles long, in a straight line.

The British general ordered his columns to advance along those streets, to given points of junction and rendezvous, *and without firing a shot* at the people on the house-tops, or elsewhere. The flints were in some cases taken out of the soldiers' muskets.

You need hardly be told what followed. The brave troops, disciplined to strict obedience, marched along those pathways of death, without offering the slightest resistance. Their ranks were thinned by the sharpshooters from the

azoteas, or house-tops, with such fatal rapidity, that not only were the streets, at every step they took, strewed with the slain and wounded, but when they had in some instances attained, and in others nearly so, their appointed places of rendezvous, they were so reduced, by the incessant firing upon them from the house-tops, as to be obliged to take shelter in the nearest churches or convents. Still, General Whitelock had a corps of reserve of five thousand men, who had not yet come into action; and with them he might, even at the eleventh hour, have achieved the work of conquest. But, panic-struck by the death, desolation, and confusion to which his own wretched plan of operations had inevitably led, he lost all self-possession, energy, and courage. He capitulated, most disgracefully capitulated,—on condition of being allowed to retire with his yet but half-vanquished army; and he agreed not only to abandon all farther attack on Buenos Ayres, but to sail, within two months, with his whole force, from the River Plate.

“Put in,” said Alzaga, the *Alcalde de primer*

voto, or mayor, who was a party to the drawing up of the terms of capitulation, "put in, that he shall also evacuate Montevideo." "Oh," said the viceroy, Liniers, "that is out of the question; it would spoil the whole matter." "*Let us put it down,*" replied the resolute and influential citizen; "it can be easily taken out, if objected to." It *was* put down, and it was *not* objected to.

The bewildered Whitelock conceded all; and in a few days afterwards we beheld to our dismay, in Montevideo, the transports and ships of war, which, one little month before, had conveyed our noble army to anticipated triumph, returning with that army defeated, and its general irretrievably disgraced. The hospitals were once more filled with the sick, wounded, and dying. Three thousand gallant fellows had attested by their death their dauntless courage in the streets of Buenos Ayres; and yet General Whitelock—himself the sole cause of the unpardonable catastrophe—strutted on the azotea of the government house, or rode through the streets of Montevideo, the only unconcerned individual, to all appearance, in the midst of the shame and



disgrace which he had brought upon the arms of Great Britain.

To have seen him at the moment when the garrison was about to be delivered up to General Elio, you might have supposed him, from his air, a Wellington or a Wolfe. It was impossible, from any outward demonstration, to fancy him a man conscious of the appalling and criminal loss of life which his dogged stupidity had entailed upon his brave companions in arms, or of the discomfiture which his utter incapacity had brought upon an army which, under better management, might have conquered and kept one-half of the New World. With the utmost unconcern, he saw us quit a soil which, but for his folly and madness, might have been ours for generations yet unborn.

What was greatly to be admired, in this terrible reverse, was the unassuming deportment, indeed the increased deference, of the Spaniards towards the English. They never alluded to the subject of Whitelock's defeat; and when they spoke of our departure, it was ever with an expression of regret that they were about to lose many personal friends. Such conduct

I could not but think very demonstrative of courtesy and good feeling; magnanimous almost in a people now triumphant over their recent invaders.

I lingered in the town till the last moment, and then, with a heavy heart, bade adieu to M. Godefroy and his family. The parting was more like that of a son from father and mother, and of a brother from sisters, than of a foreigner and an enemy from people whose acquaintance he had not enjoyed above five months.

I had the mortification, too, to see the Spanish colours flying on the citadel, and at the government house. Elio and his staff had already received the keys of that place; the last English stragglers were hurrying to their boats; and in a few days the whole fleet, consisting of two hundred and fifty ships, sailed out of the River Plate. The disastrous manner in which we were thus driven from the country was, as you may conceive, the more keenly felt that such a result was not only unexpected, but the very reverse of what even the least sanguine calculation had anticipated.

Whoever has passed from a state of excitement on shore, to one of monotony on board of ship;

from the vivifying exercise of the social affections, to companionship with listless passengers in a dingy cabin, must have felt the transition to be anything but agreeable. To see the uphill work it sometimes is for men to get through the day ! Here shall be one firing at empty bottles, there another yawning away the long forenoon ; now, some one is playing off a tiresome practical joke upon two more who sit prosing over repeated doses of grog. All are doing their best to kill time, and every one is failing in the arduous attempt.

For myself, I mixed little with the passengers ; my mind reverted constantly to the friends I had left at Montevideo, and I could scarcely believe that I had been in an enemy's country. Often, indeed, as the vessel, at night, sped her smooth, but rapid course over the deep, leaving the brilliant glow of her track outspread behind her, like the burnished tail of a comet, I was moved even to sadness by the reflection that I might never again see persons who had rendered themselves to me so deservedly dear, and from whose society I was now carried at so rapid a rate.

Then I looked upon the large fleet of ships by which I was surrounded; I saw that fleet carrying home a defeated and disheartened army; I saw hundreds of merchants and speculators, returning to England, either impoverished or ruined, from fields whence they had hoped to gather very golden harvests; and, coming nearer home, I found my own prospects, which I had thought a few brief weeks before so brilliant, now clouded and obscured. The change of circumstances was in every view a disheartening one.

Yet, in alleviation of these more sombre musings, it was cheering to reflect that whatever may be the causes of quarrel, and whatsoever the ravages of war, between nation and nation, they cannot stop that current of the milk of human kindness which circulates, in greater or less abundance, in the breast of every individual of the family of man. Endued with the same nature, created with the same propensities, influenced by like motives, and animated by like passions, man everywhere recognises man; the general principles of humanity are developed in all the various circumstances in which he

is placed; while in all the different climes which he inhabits; under every modification of national character, still a feeling common to humanity prevails.

So to me, a protestant, the right hand of fellowship had been held out by the catholic; one of a nation of invaders, I was individually cherished as a friend by those invaded; far distant from my own family, I was received at Montevideo into the bosom of many families to whom, a few months before, I had been totally unknown; and my youth and inexperience, which, in another country, might have exposed me to worldly artifice and trickery, were there my best passports to pleasing society. They were my chief claim to hospitality and kindness.

I was truly glad when we sailed into Kinsale harbour, after a tedious passage of fourteen weeks, during four of which we had been on short allowance of provisions and water.

That nothing might be wanting to complete the mistakes of the disastrous River Plate expedition, the transports had taken in their water too near the mouth of the river; so that it was

brackish and putrid, long before the fleet reached Ireland; and the use of it had caused the death, from dysentery, of many of the troops.

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

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## LETTER X.

To J—— G——, Esq.

Entrance to Rio de Janeiro—the Town of Rio de Janeiro—the Custom-House—Streets, &c., of Rio de Janeiro—Negro Politeness—Jewellers—Alfayetes, or Tailors.

*London, 1838.*

AFTER a sojourn at home of only a few months, I once more turned my thoughts to South America, an intercourse having been opened up with Brazil, in consequence of the emigration of the royal family of Portugal to Rio de Janeiro; and I sailed in the *Ajax* for that capital, at which, after a passage of eight weeks, I arrived on the 8th of October, 1808.

I purpose to give you an account of what I there saw and heard; but I must take you out first, for a short sail, to the entrance of Rio de Janeiro bay, and detain you a few moments while I introduce you to my first view of the surround-

ing scenery of a city then, as now, the seat of royalty.

When we first got soundings, we knew from the chart that we must be at the mouth of the entrance to the harbour; but we had not yet seen land. The ship lay for two days motionless upon a sea like glass. A dense fog was outspread upon the water, and shut up our view within a very narrow space. The air was so sultry as to be scarcely supportable, and the act of breathing was difficult, almost to suffocation. Every living thing on board panted, and sought in vain a breath of air to relieve it from the intolerable effects of the heated atmosphere.

Towards the afternoon a gentle breeze came rippling along the surface of the water. The air grew comparatively cool, and the vessel began to move; the mist, in some places, gently faded away; in others it rose in a dense mass up from the bosom of the sea. Our view began to expand; and we saw what looked like land within a short distance of us. The fog kept still clearing away, and the breeze freshening, till at length the whole firmament of mist broke up into large clouds, and separated not the



“water-from the waters,” but mountains, headlands, islands, from each other, leaving them to stand out in all their tropical richness, and in all their varied magnificence of altitude and shape. We were in the midst of islands. Forth in the distance, from a lingering body of mist, sailed a majestic ship of war with the English ensign flying; and another moment discovered to us a fort in the midst of the sea, with the Portuguese royal standard unfurled. Vessels which had been in the same predicament with our own started up around us; and whereas we seemed at first to be the only ship bound for Rio de Janeiro, we were now sailing into that place with a little fleet. Anything so like magic can scarcely be conceived. It seemed as if we had emerged in one instant, without either expectation or volition, from chaos into a world clothed with richness and beauty altogether marvellous. From being the solitary inmates of a confined ship, we felt as if transformed into colonists of a fairy-land already peopled and prepared for us. We became actors in the living and busy scene now before us. As we approached the bay, and

had a moment's leisure to look back upon the splendid entrance through which we had sailed, we saw behind us a gorgeous succession of richly-wooded mountain scenery, with one conspicuous cone towering high above its fellows, and called, from the accuracy of its conic form, "The Sugar-loaf." Before us lay outspread the large city of Rio de Janeiro, with its houses all whitewashed, and conspicuously contrasting with the deep shades of tropical verdure around. Then there was an innumerable fleet of ships at anchor in the bay, and this was large enough to contain, and sheltered enough to protect, the navy of the whole world. Along the circular and sweeping beach we saw on every hand beautiful whitewashed villages, isolated mansions, or small groups of cottages. They lay embosomed in a profusion of luxuriant vegetation; the sea laved the white sandy beach with its constant succession of breaking waves; and the scene was one of such grandeur, beauty, variety, and animation, as quite to forbid the hope of conveying a just idea of it by description.

But good and evil, beauty and deformity, are laws of nature too universally associated to admit of a hope of our ever finding them dissevered.

We had just been observing and admiring Nature in her most beautiful forms and gayest profusion of attire. We had seen her hand-maidens, Art and Civilization, taking up their abode in her loveliest haunts; and by means of the outstretched city, the cheerful village, the goodly mansion, and the lowly cottage, adding to her beauty, filling up and completing the landscape which burst upon our view. All this, however, we saw *in perspective*. When we came to a closer inspection of the component parts of the scene, the aspect which nature had worn remained the same; but that which art had assumed was changed indeed.

Of course our feelings, on proceeding to land, after the distant contemplation of the beauties by which we were surrounded, were wrought up to a high pitch of interest, and we indulged in exaggerated anticipations of what we were to see on shore. We expected something of the fairy-like enchantment of feeling which had come over us as we sailed into the bay, would be preserved.

But who shall describe our disappointment? The first scene that presented itself to our view was a row of filthy canoes, with nearly naked blacks in them, waiting to paddle people off to the shipping. Then there were numbers of huge, uncouth market-boats, covered with thatch, so as to constitute sorts of floating houses. These were filled with blacks and mulattoes, male and female, in the most scanty and filthy habiliments. The fruit, much of it, was stale, and sending forth a very noxious smell. The heat was altogether suffocating, for the sea-breeze had now died away. The beach was covered with the offal of a huge city, in which there is literally no police, and where everything eatable turns to immediate putrefaction. This offal, with endless quantities of fish and vegetables which had become putrid before they could be sold in the market, was alternately laved up upon the beach, and drawn back again to the sea by the receding surge. The whole of this part of the harbour was made by filth, as the sea by Leviathan, "like a pot of ointment." One would have pronounced "the deep to be hoary." Clumsy wooden piers, supported by huge wooden piles, jutted a little way into the water, which,

with all its scum, dashed in among them, and literally seemed to boil.

As we landed, we were assailed by a smell of fried sardinhas (a sort of small herring) and of pork; from innumerable little stalls, kept by men and women of every colour under the sun. We proceeded into the town; and what objects presented themselves to us there! First, there was the custom-house, which surpassed all the conceptions I had ever formed of Babel. Hundreds of people were crowding into it, and out of it, and every one of them obstructing the way of the other. There was your man in office, dressed formally in a court suit of black, and his dozen clerks, in one corner. They were beset by fifty applicants, bawling out in Dutch, German, English, and French, for their respective documents. There was a room in which innumerable packages of British manufactures were opened, and where each piece of goods had affixed to it, by means of pending threads, a stamp, upon molten lead. The operations of a glass-house, during the heat of summer in England, are cool and refreshing, as compared with the glow of fire, and

process of fusing lead in this tropical pandemonium.

From it we passed to the place where brawny negroes were landing goods from fifty misshapen barges. Each troop of blacks, as they hoisted out the goods, were singing their own peculiar war-song ; while, as they were thus engaged, the perspiration poured down the grooves of their backs in torrents.

Passing, at last, from the piers to the yard from which merchandise was finally taken away, I saw pipes of wine slung by thick cords to a long pole, which was laid on the shoulders of six nearly naked negroes. These marched off with their swinging load, and sang, in loud and marvellous dissonance, to the unequal but elastic motion of their burthen, as they carried it over streets, in which every huge stone stood up, and left a yawning gulf between it and its next neighbour. These blacks were followed by a succession of laborious groups, all carrying their respective burthens in the same way. Now and then low-wheeled hurdles were introduced, upon which to bear off the unwieldy bales ; and

discordant songs and yells accompanied each individual process.

The merchandise of Tyre could not have been more cumbrous and varied than that of Rio de Janeiro. The hubbub and the fatigue of everything connected with the custom-house made me hasten away from a place so unbearable, at once from its confusion, effluvia, heat, and deafening din. I wondered how any organization of human senses and susceptibilities could be found equal to the work going on within this monstrous Babel.

I now threaded my way through streets so narrow, that it was with the greatest difficulty one carriage could pass another in them. The houses were from two to four stories high. Not a pane of glass was to be seen in any one of them. Instead of this, the openings in the house for light and air, were shrouded by balustrades of latticed wood-work.

From under these the inhabitants, chiefly females, raising the jalousies, or lowering them down at pleasure, peeped out upon passengers, without in return being seen by them. The whole town looked like a large darkened convent. The

men you met were all of a swarthy and unhealthy complexion: women you saw none, except mulattoes and negresses. Every here and there two athletic blacks were to be observed carrying a large palanquin, the female inmate of which was sacredly guarded from public gaze by the close and richly-embroidered folds of a scarlet or blue cloth. From between the openings of these folds, as from under her lattice-worked window, the lady thus carried could also look out upon passengers, without being perceived by them. The few carriages I saw were drawn by two mules. The postilions were accoutred in an awkwardly-cut but full-dress livery-coat, of which the colour was generally sky-blue, or tawny-orange, with deep and gaudy facings. An opera cocked-hat, and boots that reached to the thighs, completed their costume. The carriages themselves looked exactly like those we still see in this country made of gilt gingerbread.

The number of persons I met in full-dress,—black coats, black satin breeches, silk stockings, gold knee and shoe-buckles, opera-hats, gold-headed canes, and ponderous gold seals,—led me to think there must be a great many dinner-par-



ties going forward. I was mistaken; for as I went into a shop to buy a pair of gloves, the man-milliner who served me was precisely thus attired. A little farther on I saw a whole group of men, in similar costume, sitting at a shop-door, smoking cigars and drinking lemonade.

This seemed odd; but what was my surprise, as I proceeded, to see two negroes meet each other, dressed in tattered and ragged coats, waistcoats, knee-breeches, and opera-hats, but without shoes or stockings! They stood bowing the one to the other, hat in hand, and in polite contention as to which should be covered first. They at length seemed to agree that they should return their hats to their heads simultaneously, so that one should not have precedence of the other. A snuff-box was then pulled by each from his respective girdle; with half-a-dozen bows, a pinch of snuff was exchanged; and very ceremonious inquiries were mutually made about their respective senhoras, or ladies. The hats were again taken off and lowered to the ground; and after an amicable struggle as to which should take the wall, these curious specimens

of Brazilian politeness and etiquette walked on their several ways.

I now passed down a street called "Rua dos Plateiros," or Silversmiths' Street, where, in little dark and miserable shops, I saw trinkets of massive gold, pearls, diamonds, and every kind of precious stone of the richest description. Gold buckles of every size and shape formed a conspicuous part of the rich display before me.

From this street I passed into the "Rua dos Alfayetes," or Tailors' Street; and to have judged by the rows of benches filled with men working on the pavement in front of every door, as well as by the number of blacks and mulattoes all busy with their needles, I might have supposed the whole population of the town to be occupied in this one trade. The "Senhor Alfayete," or my Lord Tailor, as he is called, is a very important personage among the Brazilians; for this people can form no conception of dignity unless it be dressed up in all the extravagance of an old-fashioned finery.

Having taken this superficial view of the town, I returned on board of ship for the evening, with

a thousand images of men and manners so strange, of things so incongruous, and of anticipations so undefined buzzing in my head, as to leave me little prospect of repose for that night. My further observations on the strange set of beings among whom I now was, you shall have in my next letter.

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

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## LETTER XI.

To J—— G——, Esq.

Inhabitants of Rio de Janeiro—Difference between Spaniards  
and Portuguese—Portuguese Society—King John's Equipage—Anecdote of King John.

*London, 1838.*

YOUR Continental tourist sees only slight modifications of men and manners; but your South American traveller sees them developed with a contrast so broad, set forth in points of view so different from any in which they had before been exhibited to him, that he cannot well pass them over without edification and remark.

At Rio de Janeiro I contemplated despotism in some of its worst forms; unrestrained vice in many of its debasing effects; and appalling slavery under some of its most odious aspects.

I saw a king with pompous ministers, ruling by caprice; I saw men enervated by climate, and relaxed by vicious indulgence, till their frames

had become wasted, and their characters contemptible; and I followed the wretched slave, sold to the highest bidder in the market-place, till I found him in the house of his master, broken in by the incisions of the whip to the trade he would have him to learn, and to the abject obedience he would have him to yield.

I considered that all these were only exemplifications of the character, modified by circumstances, of that most anomalous of all monsters in his half civilized state, the human monster.

I heard the flogging of the slave, and my heart, failed me, and sickened on listening to the unheeded appeal of his piteous cries for mercy; I saw him next day, perhaps, toiling and sweating under a tropical sun, to furnish the required sum of gain for the heartless master who had the day before bastinadoed him; and it was with indignant reluctance, yet upon the most irresistible evidence, that I was constrained to confess myself one of the same family at once of master and of man.

The Spaniards and Portuguese, though originally one people, are now the most different imaginable. Not only are their habits different,

but there is an acerbity of feeling between them which is not, I think, displayed by either in their intercourse with other nations. We all know that civil feuds, like family broils, are always the most bitter. One nation may go to war with another, and yet hope for eventual reconciliation, just as one individual may, for a time, be on bad terms with the man who subsequently becomes his best friend : but a kingdom split into two, like a house divided against itself, cannot stand but in a state of perpetual animosity and strife.

The strong national antipathy which the Spaniards and Portuguese have to each other, is the more remarkable, when you consider that religion has nothing to do with the quarrel.

Both nations profess the catholic creed ; but as nations, they both set at unequivocal defiance the catholic command of living "in the spirit of unity, which is the bond of peace."

To so great a pitch is this national feeling of antipathy carried, that the very language of Spain, though so similar to that of Portugal, is viewed with dislike by the Portuguese, as the corruption of the pure Castilian is held in contempt by the

Spaniards. I endeavoured, as fast as possible, to master the Portuguese language; for when I came up to a fidalgo, with my Moorish gutturals from the Spanish, I could very well perceive that I advanced nothing in his good graces.

On the whole, I much prefer the Spaniards to the Portuguese. The prominent feature of Spanish manners is a sedate urbanity; of Portuguese, an overstrained ceremony.

As to society among the Brazilians at Rio de Janeiro, it may be said there is none; for I cannot call that society from which females are excluded. Generally speaking, the husband of a Brazilian wife is not so much her companion as her keeper. His house is the abode of jealousy and distrust: for he cannot always stretch his confidence to the point of imagining fidelity in the wife of his bosom, any more than he can rely upon the virtuous forbearance of the friend of his heart. His daughters are brought up in Moorish seclusion, and his wife is delivered over to the keeping of a train of sombre slaves and domestics.

I can say little or nothing to you, therefore, of Brazilian society. I found every effort at

introduction to it unavailing. There were such things in Rio de Janeiro, among the highest circles, as occasional parties, very formal, and of very short duration ; but no foreigners, not even the *corps diplomatique*, were admitted to them, except upon rare occasions. The consequence of this exclusion of females from the common laws of humanity and of social intercourse was, that the men congregated, and spent their time together in the coffee-houses and other places of public resort.

As I was walking one day in the outskirts of the town, a jingling, old, uncouth-looking vehicle, drawn by six mules, in rusty harness, and bestridden by antiquated-looking coachmen (not postilions) approached me. Two swarthy and diminutive hussars, mounted on horses like rats, preceded, in the capacity of out-riders, the cumbersome machine. It was followed by about a dozen of the same kind of household troops, and proved to be one of the royal carriages, containing the portly personage of Don João, the king.

People on horseback dismounted as the royal cortège approached ; some foot-passengers of the



lower order kneeled; all took off their hats, and came to a stand; while one of the out-riders, passing a recently-arrived Englishman, unacquainted with the tokens of respect exacted by royalty, gave him a substantial intimation of his duty with the flat side of his sword.

I was told the following anecdote of the king. A vessel having arrived in port, at a time of great anxiety, as to the state of the campaign in Portugal, with recent news from that country, the king, anxious to have a *vivâ voce* account of all the particulars, ordered the captain of the vessel, a rough, independent, John Bull sort of man, into his presence. As an act of condescension, the royal hand was held out for the English tar to kiss. Unaccustomed to the etiquette of a court, and little dreaming that any one human being could be expected to kiss the hand of another, the English captain took the action for one of simple kindness, indicative of his Majesty's desire to welcome him to Brazil, and make his better acquaintance. In the fulness of his heart, the sailor grasped the royal hand as he would a marline-spike; and shaking it with seaman-like cordiality, he told King John not to

be down-hearted, for that the English would certainly drive the French out of Portugal. The king wiped his tears, forced from him partly by the tale he heard, and partly by the squeeze he received. The courtiers would have interposed, but the king, with his usual composure, and paucity of words, said "deixa estar," "let him alone."

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

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## LETTER XII.

To J—— G——, Esq.

Classes or Castes of South American population—The Aborigines  
—Blending and grades of Caste—The Negro—The Portuguese Fidalgo.

*London, 1838.*

It is my intention, in this letter, to give you a rapid sketch of the various classes or castes of South American population; and especially of that of Rio de Janeiro. In England, my own ideas were very vague on the subject, as compared with the knowledge I have gained from actual observation; and I hope that by transmitting to you the result of such observation, I shall impart a more defined notion than you now have of the sort of people among whom I have lived for so long a period of my life.

How the continent of America was discovered by Columbus, three hundred and fifty years ago, we all know. That it was then peopled by Indian tribes, living in various states of savage rude-

ness, or primitive simplicity, we also know. The Mexicans, under Montezuma, were in a comparatively advanced state of society; but still their records were hieroglyphical, their bodies nearly naked; their personal ornaments were feathers, their skins were painted and overlaid with oil; their temples were the abodes of fantastic images; their devotion to their king was almost idolatrous; their conception of the Spaniards was that they were gods; and of their artillery that it was thunder. I do not think therefore, notwithstanding all that has been written to prove the contrary, that the Mexican Indians could have been, in our acceptation of the term, a civilized people. Then for the Yncas, and their subjects in Peru, they were, no doubt, an amiable, mild, and confiding race, with plenty of silver and gold, earthen mounds or mausoleums in which to inter their dead; beads with which to mark their knowledge of numbers; and the belief that their kings were descended from the sun. If these facts give them a title to be considered a civilized people, they have it; but their civilization must have been of a very different kind from that which we now designate by this word.

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The Chilians were a wild, indomitable race; the Patagonians not less so; some of the Indian tribes of Paraguay, though very numerous, were so imbecile as to be subdued to the most servile obedience by the Jesuits; while many of the Brazilian aborigines were positive cannibals.

On the whole, therefore, I cannot but conclude that America, when first discovered, was peopled by savages, in the common acceptation of that phrase; though savages, I allow, under various grades of removal from absolute barbarism. The next curious question is, whence did they come? To this I think the answer is, from Asia. Many migratory tribes may have crossed from one continent to the other at Behring's straits; and wandering thence for thousands of miles, located themselves in the vast, fertile, and inviting regions of America, North and South.

As to how long ago this may have been, speculation has been very busy; but upon evidence so equivocal, and data so conjectural, that I think we must allow that point to be one of impossible, or very difficult ascertainment. Fortunately, it is one of very little consequence, except to the

over-curious chronologist, or indefatigable devotee of antiquarian research.

Supposing the Indians to be of origin as ancient as the Egyptians, what the better should we be for this fact? Of what great consequence can it be to us, whether they arrived in the New World in an absolutely savage state, and rose to gradual and comparative civilization, or whether they came, like Moses, skilled in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and degenerated into the state in which they were found by Cortez, Pizarro, and Mendoza? If, however, you are curious upon such questions, I refer you to the multifarious works which treat of them; while I am content with the less difficult part of remarking upon the country and its inhabitants as I have seen them, and of taking for my guide, as to the past, authentic history, from the time of Columbus downwards.

The first question I ask myself is, where are the aborigines of the country? and Echo answers, "where?" I saw none of them about Montevideo; I saw none of them at Rio de Janeiro. I was told there were a few wandering tribes of

them on the Pampas, or plains of the River Plate, and also that there were scattered and migratory hordes in the woods, and by the streamlet banks of the interior of Brazil.

But in the now populous districts of Portuguese America, as well as on the whole eastern side of the River Plate, of which side Montevideo is the capital, the poor Indians have been nearly exterminated. Their birthplace and birthright have been wrested from them, in Brazil, by soldiers and adventurers from Portugal. These, as they proceeded to establish themselves in the country, brought some females from Europe, and imported, at a later period, a much larger proportion from Africa. The mass of the population, claiming to be white, is descended from the original Portuguese settlers, and from African and Indian women. The Ethiopian blood, in the course of centuries, has got somewhat attenuated; so that the man who has not curly hair, however dun may be his hue, boasts that he is of "*sangre noble*," or noble blood.

Light hair, and a ruddy complexion, are held to be indisputable and enviable marks of nobility.

A Portuguese poetess is recorded to have sung thus :—

Olhos pardos e negros  
São os commues ;  
Mais os do minho amante  
Deus fêz azues.

Which may be rendered as follows :—

Black eyes and brown  
You may every day see ;  
But blue, like my lover's,  
The gods made for me.

Thus you may perceive that the population of South America is of a very heterogeneous character. The highest, and most aristocratic class of it, is descended from the original invaders, or marauders, who took over with them European mistresses, or wives. The next grade, or caste, is that descended from mixed Portuguese, and Indian or African ancestors: then comes a sort of dubious race, claiming descent from a European male parent, but with very equivocal pretensions to it: your mulatto of decidedly African caste follows next; and last of all comes poor Sambo himself, from Congo. But the greatest dons are your real Europeans, men who,



having given up a wine-shop in Oporto, or abandoned a counter at Lisbon, are converted into fidalgos in Brazil, and consider all classes of mixed blood as the dust beneath their feet. The hostility between natives of the mother country and creoles is so bitter, that it is no uncommon thing to see a European father endeavouring to coerce his American born son into all the degradation of bondage. What is worse, the Europeans, having always been comparatively few in number, appear to have acted, from the first conquest of the country, on that intuitive and constitutional fear which has at last proved to be well founded, that their own offspring would one day rise up against them, and wrest from their fathers the soil which these obtained by conquest, and the others possess by inheritance.

The population of Rio is as various in hue, as it is jarring in principle. Of about one hundred thousand inhabitants, the amount of the population when I was there, at least fifty thousand were negroes, twenty thousand mulattoes, one, two, or three castes removed from black; of native born subjects, descended from European

parents, there were about twenty thousand; and of foreigners and Portuguese who had migrated from home, about ten thousand.

The European, and especially the Englishman, when he first lands amid so motley a family, is struck with the desperate inequality which exists between the black man and the white. The negro, in a state of almost complete nudity, does the work of a horse; and he carries home the earnings of the day to his heartless master, who, in return, feeds him with farinha and banana; and drills him to hard labour by means of the thong, or of the cane. Then, so great is the preponderance of the coloured population over the white, that in the streets you can scarcely believe you are not in a colony of blacks and mulattoes, their misery, their filth, their nakedness, their disease, their howlings as they work, the pitiless rigour with which they are treated, and the premature death to which they are too often doomed, are all things which, on an Englishman's first arrival, alternately chill his heart with horror, and melt it with compassion. Yet so fatal is the influence of habit, so invariable in its working is the familiarizing process of association, by which

we come at length to contemplate even misery with indifference, provided it be always before us, that ere I had been three months at Rio, my susceptibilities became blunted, and my impressions upon first landing were almost worn from my mind.

I began to think the naked slave was in his natural place ; and not less in his the Portuguese fidalgo, tricked out in his black satin breeches, cocked hat, gold-headed cane, and shoe-buckles ; in his large gold seals, and gawdy amethyst breast-pin ; in his richly-embroidered shirt, with lace frill ; and in his large display of ruffles, emerging from his wrists, and contrasting, in their purity, with his tawny hands.

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

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## LETTER XIII.

To J—— G——, Esq.

Scene on the Campo de Sant' Ana.

*London, 1838.*

IN the course of my stay at Rio de Janeiro, I witnessed a very singular spectacle in the Campo de Sant' Ana; and if slavery were not to be seen in any other form than the one in which it was exhibited to me there, I should be forced to conclude that, of the many conditions in the world, that of the African slave is one of the most happy.

The Campo de Sant' Ana is an immensely large unfinished square in the suburbs of the town. It is a sort of common, and is covered with a short greensward. Thither, every Sunday and holiday (which are called dias de festa, or days of festivity), masses of the negro popu-

lation, amounting in the aggregate to ten or fifteen thousand, resort for amusement and recreation. Very curious recreation it is, and offers to you such a singular spectacle of African hilarity, uproar, and confusion, as is not perhaps to be witnessed, on the same extensive scale, in any other country out of Africa itself. Early in the day, I saw crowds and groups of negroes hurrying to the scene of action; and whereas, when at work, they are almost naked, the most of them on that day had some sort of clothing. Many of them were decked out in all the gaiety of white trousers, and jacket, and of calico, pink, yellow, and light blue, for waistcoats. Others had sashes to correspond, chains and large seals without watches; cocked hats, snuff-boxes, and yellow canes. Many smoked their pipes or cigars; some had already partaken freely of the caña (a spirit made from the sugar-cane) and all were in evidently high good humour, both with themselves and others. The joke, the laugh, the intensity of gesticulation, and earnestness of demeanour, evinced they were bent upon an excursion of no common pleasure or interest. Their politeness to each other might

have graced a higher school, and would have commanded praise, if it had not so irresistibly excited mirth. The bows, the scrapes, the twirl with which the snuff-boxes were exchanged, the difficulty one man had to persuade another to take the wall, and the continual lowering of the hat in token of mutual respect,—to say nothing of the elaborate compliments which passed, and the eager inquiries which were made respecting my Lady So-and-so,—all contrasted so curiously with the garb and condition of the parties, as to provoke the most ludicrous associations. Still I sympathised most sincerely in the temporary happiness which these poor victims of oppression and cruelty were enjoying; and while I could not help laughing at the expense of the merry thousands that surrounded me, it was a real and heartfelt consolation to observe that their hard and wretched lot could be forgotten by them for a season, and make way for an intense, even though evanescent, enjoyment of life.

Onward pressed the groups of the various African nations, to the Campo de Sant' Ana, the destined theatre of revelry and din. Here was the native of Mosambique, and Quilumana, of

Cabinda, Luanda, Benguela, and Angola. Men who had never been able to live in peace at home, whose business was war, and who, with the fierceness common to savage nature, inflicted cruelties on each other, which all equally scorned to deprecate, and of which all were too haughty to complain, mingled here in momentary reconciliation, under the levelling influence of slavery. The profitable alternative of selling instead of slaying their enemies, is a snare tendered by the whites to the barbarian warriors, into which the cupidity of our common nature has made them ever ready to fall.

In their capacity of *slaves*, they are as one nation. The war-song and the dance, the calabash, kettle-drum, and the rude but shrill fife,—the antics, gambols, and gesticulations of savage, yet not untutored performers, have charms for the negro, which banish from his mind all present feeling of hardship and degradation, and restore him for a season to one of the common privileges of humanity—oblivion of woe.

The dense population of the Campo de Sant' Ana was subdivided into capacious circles, formed

each of from three to four hundred blacks, male and female.

Within these circles the performers danced to the music which was also stationed there ; and I know not whether the energy of the musicians or that of the dancers was most to be admired. You might see the cheeks of an athlète of Angola ready to crack under the exertion of producing a hideous sound from a calabash, while another performer dealt blows so thick and heavy on his kettle-drum, that only the impervious nature of a bullock's hide could resist them. A master of ceremonies, dressed like a mountebank, presided over the dance ; but it was to encourage, not restrain, the boisterous mirth which prevailed with paramount sway. Eight or ten figurantes were moving to and fro, in the midst of the circle, in a way to exhibit the human frame divine under every conceivable variety of contortion and gesticulation. Presently two or three standing in the crowd appeared to think there was not animation enough ; and, with a shriek or a song, they rushed in and joined the dance. The musicians played a louder and



more discordant music; the dancers, reinforced by the auxiliaries mentioned, gathered fresh animation; the auxiliaries themselves seemed wrapped in all the furor of demons; the shouts of approbation and clapping of hands were redoubled; every looker-on participated in the sibylline spirit which animated the dancers and musicians; the welkin rang with the wild enthusiasm of the negro clans; till thousands of voices, accompanied by the whole music on the field, closed in a scene of jubilee which had continued nearly all day, under the burning rays of a tropical sun, and which had been supported by such bodily exertions on the part of the several performers, as bathed their frames in one continual torrent of perspiration.

In half an hour, the various groups dispersed, in the greatest order; and Campo de Sant' Ana, as Night threw over it her sombre mantle, became still and silent as the desert or the tomb.

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

## LETTER XIV.

To J—— G——, Esq.

Thunder-storm at Rio de Janeiro—Land and Sea Breezes—the  
Pampero—Society of Buenos Ayres—Music and Dancing.

*London, 1838.*

SHORTLY after I had witnessed the Campo de Sant' Ana scene, I bade a not unwilling adieu to Rio de Janeiro. I liked neither the climate nor the people of that place; and I soon found, that all fertile and beautiful as Nature had made the country, there was something more than that required to counterbalance the many *désagrémens* connected with the unattractive town, and its unsocial citizens.

The succession of political events had once more opened up a free intercourse with the River Plate, and I was glad to avail myself of a favourable offer which was made to me to proceed to Buenos Ayres.

The evening before I embarked for that port, I witnessed a very splendid scene at Rio. Return-

ing about sunset from the beautiful bay of Botofogo, in order to be ready to join my vessel early in the morning on which she was to sail, I was overtaken on my way by a most violent storm. The clouds suddenly gathered into a dense and gloomy mass of black and lowering vapour. The lightning gleamed in the distant horizon, and hollow-murmuring thunder rolled its low and portentous sound over the whole darkened canopy of heaven. The air was sultry and close, almost to suffocation; and everything indicated an immediate and heavy storm.

I rode on, in the hope of escaping it; but before I could reach Rio, the windows of heaven were opened; and down, in one mighty torrent, poured the impetuous waters. The thunder cracked in loud and louder peals, and the lightning became more forked and vivid in its flashes. My trembling and affrighted horse refused for a few moments to proceed on the road, and ran violently up against a hedge for shelter. There was no house near; and the storm, assuming every moment a fiercer aspect, looked as if it had determined to rage for ever. The glare of the lightning now illumined the whole atmosphere, except

at intervals so short as to render the transition from light to darkness both terrific and sublime. My feeling at each such transition was as if I had been struck blind; while the now loud and incessant roar of the thunder was such as might have indicated war in heaven.

Those who have never witnessed a tropical storm can have little idea of either its magnificence or irresistibility. It seemed on this night as if a breaking up of the ordinary laws of Nature were at hand. I spurred on my nearly frantic horse, however, and we reached, at length, the town of Rio de Janeiro. Here a spectacle was presented to me altogether novel. The streets there, with the exception of the Rua Direita, are very narrow, and the spouts by which the water is carried off the roofs of the houses, project on either side so as nearly to meet each other in the middle of the street. The result is, that on occasions of very heavy rain, the waters from these spouts meet, and form, by their junction, arches of crystal as it were, along the whole line of street. These liquid arches, as I passed under them, were lit up and burnished by the vivid lightning, and the whole city looked as if it

were the abode of genii, with canopies of transparent crystal, and illuminations of electric fire.

At daybreak the next morning we were slowly wafted out of the bay by the land-breeze; for as there is a sea-breeze which generally blows into the harbour every evening, so there is a land one, which blows out of it at the dawn of day, and for an hour or two after it. But for these breezes, especially the evening one, it would be impossible to exist in Rio. Often have I anxiously watched its arrival, and when I have seen it come rippling the bay, and felt its first refreshing air fanning my feverish frame, I have experienced a transition the most delightful; a sensation so grateful, as to constitute one of the highest luxuries which the climate can afford.

We arrived off the mouth of the River Plate in seven days from Rio de Janeiro, and calculated on being at anchor off Buenos Ayres in two days more. But we were encountered by one of those hurricanescalled pamperos,—thesouth-west gales,—which blow over the plains or pampas, that intervene between the Andes and the River Plate. We were forced again out to sea, and did not reach our destined port for twenty-two days, in-

stead of nine, as anticipated. The fury of those hurricanes, while they last, is incredible. Unbroken by any resistance in its career, the blast sweeps over hundreds of leagues of level ground, and often, on reaching the River Plate, leaves the sandy shores of it on the western side uncovered for some miles. I remember one occasion in 1810-11, on which the water was blown out of the river opposite to Buenos Ayres; and though the Plate is there thirty miles wide, and the tide seldom recedes more than a quarter of a mile, yet the shore was laid bare for upwards of six miles, and the Porteños (so are the inhabitants of Buenos Ayres called) sent out upon it artillery to attack a Spanish sloop-of-war, lying at about that distance from the town. She had been left, in naval phraseology, high and dry, in consequence of the extraordinary ebb-tide produced by the pampero. After this had so far moderated as to admit of the waters flowing back to their natural channel, they rushed in with the celerity of a torrent. Several persons, who were walking on the beach, were drowned, unable to escape on account of the overwhelming impetus with which the tide returned.

It was my good fortune, on arriving at Buenos Ayres, to find established there a person whose acquaintance I had made at Montevideo, and who, upon this plea, considered himself bound to take me home and lodge me in his own hospitable mansion. He had just married into an interesting family of the name of Castellanos; and living with his wife, and her two pretty sisters (one married to a captain in the Spanish navy), formed a very nice family circle. Nothing could to me have been more agreeable or more useful, than this introduction: for while I thus, after a banishment of nine months from female society, was once more admitted to it, I made rapid progress, by our daily intercourse, in the Spanish language, and had the acquaintance of most of the best families of the place. I was introduced to the Viceroy Liniers, whose star was visibly on the wane. He held the reins of government very loosely, under the control of his *audiencia* and *cabildo*; while the then celebrated Madame O'Gorman was the sole arbitress of his domestic concerns, and of the bestowal of his patronage. His successor, Cizneros, had already been named by

the court of Old Spain, to supersede the conqueror of General Whitelock.

Meantime, however, the most splendid tertulias were given by Madame; and I saw congregated, night after night, at her house, such specimens of female beauty and vivacity, as would have excited envy, or commanded admiration, in an English ball-room. The Porteñas certainly boast among them of very charming women, polished more in external appearance and manners, perhaps, than highly cultivated in mind; but they have so much good sense, penetration, and vivacity, as to leave you in doubt whether they are not better as they are, than they would be if more artificially trained. They have assuredly very little affectation or pride; and that can be no very defective training which excludes, in the formation of female character, two such odious accomplishments.

Passing one day by the convent of Santo Domingo, my attention was attracted to one of the domes of it, on which I saw conspicuously painted a great number of cannon-shot of all sizes. "Is it possible," I remarked to Mrs.



Torrents, with whom I was walking, "that so many shots could have struck that devoted turret, and yet left it standing?" "No, no," she replied: "two or three did strike it, but the friars have painted all these to superinduce the belief that the balls of you heretics could make no impression on Catholic towers. And the common people believe it. But we ladies, though not soldiers, know better than that; for look at what your balls did at Montevideo. For my part, I believe that no right religion can have anything to do with powder and ball."

There was a good-natured tone, and even complimentary turn, given to this little speech, evidently meant to palliate the chagrin my fair companion imagined might be associated in my mind with Whitelock's defeat, and the bombastic display by which it had been commemorated by the pious fraud of the Dominicans.

The great fluency and facility observable in the conversation of the Porteñas is undoubtedly traceable to their early introduction to society, and their almost nightly habit of associating together at their tertulias. There, young miss of seven or eight is expected to manage her fan,

walk, dance, and speak with as much propriety as her sister of eighteen or her mamma. And this constant method of teaching by example does, to the extent to which it goes, more than ten years of schooling towards the formation of lady-like, natural, and agreeable character and address.

As for the *bonos mores* of the young ladies, the old ones used to think them safest under the vigilant inspection of the mother. The daughters, therefore, when first I visited Buenos Ayres, were never to be seen but in the company of their mammas, or of some other married relation or friend. Not a promenade could the unmarried females take, but in the company of the married ones. They walked in a string, one before another, with the most easy, graceful, and yet dignified step you can imagine. Then the kind recognition by the courteous and elegant motion of the fan was neither to be forgotten nor imitated. The mamma was always in the rear. If a male friend met a little family group, he was permitted to take off his hat, turn round, accompany the young lady he liked best, and say to her all the pretty things he could muster; but

there was no shaking of hands, or offering of the arm. The matron did not insist upon hearing the conversation that passed between the young couple; she was content to *see* that no practical impropriety or indecorous familiarity took place. It was the same if you called at a house. The mother hastened into the drawing-room, and remained present with her daughter during the whole time of the visit. To make up for this little restraint, however, you could say what you liked at the piano, the country dance, or, better than all, during the walk.

Although these are still the general observances of female society in Buenos Ayres, they have already been greatly modified, and continue to be so, by intercourse and intermarriage with foreigners. French and English manners and customs are getting gradually interwoven with those of the natives, particularly among the higher classes.

Music is much cultivated at Buenos Ayres. There is always one lady in every house who can furnish a good performance of all the tunes required for the minuet, the waltz, and the country

dance. And when the *Porteñas* *do* dance, it is with a graceful composure and easy elegance, much beyond the medium attainment of the art derivable from any system of dancing-school education, of which I am aware, in this country.

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

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## LETTER XV.

To J—— G——, Esq.

Expedition to Paraguay—Equipment for a journey over the  
Pampas—Departure for Assumption.

*London, 1838.*

I HAVE sketched shortly to you the female society of Buenos Ayres; and I omit just now any mention of the male, because it has been already referred to in some preceding letters, and described as constituting a part, with only slight modifications, of the great South American family. Leaving Buenos Ayres behind us for the present, my purpose is to carry you with me to a remote and very little known region,—the republic of Paraguay. So far, our sketch of South America, especially of Buenos Ayres, may be considered as a somewhat necessary introduction to the interior of the River Plate; for beside that its provinces were designated, at one time, by the general appellation of Paraguay, I think that the rather excursive manner in which we have endeavoured to give you a glance at

the New World,—as a whole;—first, such as it was under the dominion of Old Spain, and secondly, as modified, and in process of being modified, by the Revolution, will enable you better to understand the question at large, and to appreciate the facts and personal adventures, which we propose shall form a more detailed illustration of the general matter.

What we are hereafter to say will have more immediate reference to the isolated province, or rather republic, of Paraguay, as now distinguished from the other provinces of the Rio de la Plata: but as there is a great distance to travel from Buenos Ayres before you can reach Assumption, and as there is something novel both in the mode of performing the journey, and in the objects which present themselves in the course of it, I shall endeavour, in the first place, to depict these.

The expedition which I undertook to Paraguay was a mercantile one; and the ship engaged for the purpose, being equipped and stored with all things necessary, commenced, in December, 1811, the laborious navigation of the River Paraná. She had twelve hundred miles alternately to sail

and warp against a stream which runs at the rate of three miles an hour; and as she was not expected during the summer season (for December there is the veriest midsummer) to make the passage in less than three months, while I could perform the distance on horseback in fifteen or sixteen days, I determined to travel by land.

Doffing the habiliments of an Englishman, I put on a light jacket, hidden under a poncho, of a sort of fustian manufacture of the country. The lightness of its material kept me cool, while the closeness of its texture, and the flapping position in which it hung, preserved me from the rain. My poncho did more than this, for it served me as a coverlet during the night, and as an awning over head while I sat at my meals, or slept my siesta during the heat of the day. The next, and most conspicuous part of my dress, was a huge straw hat, with the circular amplitude of a large parasol. Round my waist I wore a broad leathern girdle, fastened in front by a large button. At one side of this belt was my carving-knife, protected by a curiously-wrought sheath, and opposite were stuck a brace of pistols. A red silk sash tied round my small-clothes kept

them up ; and a pair of stout loose boots, armed with silver spurs, of which the rowels were nearly an inch in diameter, completed my travelling attire.

My horse furniture was equally well adapted to the country as my own apparel, and quite as little like that in use here. The hunting-saddle was exchanged for the recado, a sort of pack-saddle, underlaid by a large piece of leather covering the whole of the horse's back and haunches, and made with a view to prevent the sweat penetrating to the clothes or upper gear of the saddle. Over this pack-saddle were laid various folds of worsted and cotton stuff, to insure a soft seat, and uppermost of all, to insure a cool one, a piece of strong, but finely-dressed leather. The under part of the gear was bound to the horse by one very strong girth fastened by thongs passed through a ring-bolt, and capable of any purchase when it is required to tighten the multifarious furniture. The upper part was fastened by a stuff girth of fine texture, which goes over all. Such an apparatus *must* be cumbrous ; but seeing no bed is to be procured in travelling over the country, a saddle thus capable



of being converted into a comfortable couch is extremely convenient. The bridle I used was the common Spanish bit, with reins and head-piece plaited by the Pampa Indians, in a style of combined neatness and strength that would surprise some of our best whip-makers. My servant, a complete Gaucho, and an old post-rider, was equipped less gorgeously, but still after the same fashion as myself, with only the difference of the hat. His was the smallest, mine the largest, I had ever seen. Then his boots had been stripped off the legs of a horse, and his spurs were of iron. His poncho and saddle-gear were all coarse, and sadly the worse for the wear. They betokened a man accustomed to hard work and small pay. Behind him he carried a pair of large polished bullock's horns swung across his saddle, and filled with brandy. A little bag at the saddle-peak contained some biscuit and salt. He had a large rusty sabre at his left side, and not less rusty blunderbuss at his right: and thus was he equipped. Last of all came the postilion, all tatters, without shoes, with an old cast-off foraging cap on his head, long bushy hair hanging from under it, a jacket, and a worn-out poncho, girt

kilt-wise round his waist, with a pair of not over-clean drawers peeping from under it. He threw my small portmanteau behind his recado, and fastened to it with two hide-thongs the two ends of what contained my portable wardrobe. Seeing my servant and me already mounted, the little urchin of a guide (for he was a mere boy) said, with a note of interrogation, "*Vamo-nos, Señor?*" "Shall we be off?" I replied, "*Vamos;*" and all three, putting spurs to our horses, were a little after break of day at a hand-gallop through the still, and, at that hour, deserted streets of Buenos Ayres, for Assumption. I had letters of introduction to most of the people of the towns which lie on the road between the two places; and with the buoyancy of a traveller, bent upon new discoveries, and of a speculator going to visit the fabled country of El Dorado; with the pleasure, moreover, of being the first Englishman who had sallied forth to explore the regions of Paraguay, and visit its capital, Assumption, I felt as light as a feather, and seemed to ride as fast as the wind.

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

## LETTER XVI.

To J—— G——, Esq.

Dinner at Luxan—Carne Con Cuero—Journey to Santa Fé.

*London, 1838.*

At the end of our first day's journey I found we had ridden sixty-three miles, and passed through three villages, San Jose de Flores, Moron, and Luxan. We had changed horses at miserable huts (called post-houses) four times; and I had dined with the curate and friars at Luxan.

This dinner-party constituted the only remarkable feature of my journey that day. Having been well introduced to the curate, he thought it proper to make a feast for me, to which the governor and the three friars of the place were invited. The day was excessively hot, and both the governor and I were requested to take off our jackets, he, like myself, being dressed in no more courtly costume. The curate took off his cassock,

and the conventuals loosened their ample habits. I found that all this preparation to insure anything like comfort at dinner was not the less necessary, that the first dish which was set upon the table was an enormous olla podrida, in a huge earthen platter, sending forth volumes of steam from its multifarious and almost boiling contents. *Sans cérémonie*, and in spite of the heat, the whole party approached the platter, and ate in common out of it, each the savoury morsel most to his taste. Only the governor and I had plates; but he seemed to like the olla podrida better eaten from the dish; and I, not choosing to be singular, followed his example. Behind us there were waiting two mulatto men-servants, and a negress with nothing whatever above her chemise but a petticoat tied round her waist. These servants stood with their arms crossed till the olla podrida had nearly disappeared. The remove was a dish of the celebrated "carne con cuero," or beef roasted in the skin of the animal; and let no Englishman boast of *his* roast beef after he has tasted this. A proper dish of "*carne con cuero*" (and that of the curate of Luxan was excellent) consists of the ribs cut, hide and all,

from the side of a fat yearling. It may weigh, when served, about twenty pounds, and being roasted in the hide, of course the juice of the meat is all preserved. The animal, on part of which we were now feasting, had been slaughtered that very morning, and yet the flesh was tender and full flavoured. Carne con cuero is altogether one of the most savoury dishes of which you can well partake. It was attacked and demolished as the olla podrida had been; and the servants then removed and replaced dish after dish, as before. Roast fowl, boiled fowl, hashes, and stews followed in rapid succession. Then came the *fish* (for the Spaniards always take their fish last), and abundance of candied sweetmeats, milk, and honey. Such a dinner, so quickly despatched, and by so few people, I had not seen at any of the Buenos Ayres parties; and though I confess that my long ride enabled me to do full justice to it, yet here I must yield complete precedence to the friars, the curate, and the governor. They certainly ate four times more than I did, and expressed themselves very much concerned for my want of appetite. After

dinner we smoked our cigars, and retired to our siesta. In the evening I resumed my journey, with a benediction from the curate, and a feeling of hearty gratitude for his courtesy and open-handed hospitality.

Luxan is a poor and almost deserted little place, containing about three hundred inhabitants. It has a town-house for the cabildo, a pretty church, and spacious apartments, ranged in a quadrangular form, for the ecclesiastics.

Pampa travelling, and the miseries incident to it, are now so well known (for all is misery but the speed at which you get over the ground), that I shall not detain you long by the account of my journey to Santa Fé.

The post-houses, with a few exceptions, are all the same, mere mud huts, imperfectly thatched, kept very dirty, with a mud floor, and two or three squalling children stretched on dried hides. The skulls of the bullocks are used for seats. There is an out-room, not quite so comfortable as the main apartments, appropriated to passengers; and a mud hovel, open at every corner and point, eight feet square, serves as kitchen.

The only cooking you ever see going on there is the boiling of a little water for maté, and the roasting of a bit of beef for dinner. A few straggling fowls are to be seen picking up carrion around the hut; and there is always, at a short distance from it, a large pen or corral, made in a circular form, with strong wooden stakes, for the purpose of enclosing horses and horn-cattle. Near this larger corral there is generally a smaller one for the flock of sheep which the post-master always keeps. When you arrive at one of these huts, wanting a relay, two peons, or servants on horseback, are sent in search of a herd of horses which are out at pasture. Sometimes they find them in ten minutes, sometimes not for half an hour; and if the weather be foggy, as it often is in winter, you must be content occasionally to wait two hours, or three, for your relay. The herd, which generally consists of about two hundred horses, is driven into the corral, and the number of animals required for the travellers are caught by the lasso, and there bridled. Being thence led to the post-house door, the tardy and complex operation of

saddling is proceeded with. At the hut at which we stopped the first night, called the Post of Roxas, they killed a young kid for our supper, cooked it, and lodged us for nothing. On my remonstrating with the post-master before we started in the morning, and insisting upon it that he should take payment, he was quite affronted, and told me very emphatically that such was not the custom in that country, whatever it might be in mine. He would only take payment for our three horses,—my own, my servant's, and the postilion's, at the usual rate of three pence for three miles each, or a penny a-mile for each horse, and liberty to ride him as hard as I pleased. So that for the stage of fifteen miles before us, for a night's lodging and supper, for three horses, and for a postilion, all I had to pay was seven rials and a half, or three shillings and ninepence. The postilion claims no remuneration for himself, and yet is willing to gallop with you at the rate of thirteen or fourteen miles an hour.

Compare the expense of *this* travelling with what it is in England :



Two horses cost you 1 <i>s.</i> 3 <i>d.</i> per mile—ergo, three 1 <i>s.</i> 10½ <i>d.</i> ; £. <i>s.</i> <i>d.</i>			
this, for fifteen miles, would come to . . . . .	1	8	0
To the postilion you must pay 4 <i>s.</i> (more than our whole			
expense) . . . . .	0	4	0
And you will scarcely get a bed and supper for yourself			
and servant for less than 7 <i>s.</i> 6 <i>d.</i> , with 2 <i>s.</i> 6 <i>d.</i> to			
attendants . . . . .	0	10	0
	<hr/>		
	£2	2	0

Being about twelve times more than it costs you for the same things between Santa Fé and Buenos Ayres. It is true that everything is better in England; but you will see that the South Americans have a right to expect that they should be *twelve times* better; and the question of relative superiority can only in fairness commence, after the difference of expense has been in this ratio allowed for. I must in sorrow remark, that the primitive custom of charging the traveller nothing for board and lodging, though *invariable* at the time of which I write, 1811-12, is no longer so. Increased travelling,—increased intercourse with foreigners,—increased and increasing wants,—covetousness,—are all fast approximating the post-master of the Pampas (without any amelioration of the fare provided for passengers) to

the principles and practice of Mr. Boniface on the Bath road.

Such, then, is Pampa travelling. Why should I say anything of the wild horses and ferocious insects? Sir Francis Bond Head (late governor of Canada) has exhausted those topics; and who has not read his book?

I rose on the morning of my second day's journey a little stiff; but I travelled ninety miles notwithstanding. I made as many the next day; and in a day and a half after that, I reached Santa Fé. The whole distance between it and Buenos Ayres is 340 miles, thus accomplished in four days and a half. The regular courier performs it in *three* days and a half.

Consider, now, the extent of country I had travelled over; and ask me what, in all its length and breadth, I saw? After I left Luxan, I saw two miserable villages, called Areco and Arrecife; I saw three small towns, called San Pedro, San Nicolas, and the Rosario, containing each from 500 to 800 inhabitants; I saw one convent called San Lorenzo, containing about twenty monks; and I saw also the post-house huts. I saw thistles

higher than the horse, with the rider on his back ; here and there a few clumps of the Algarroba tree ; long grass ; innumerable herds of cattle, wild and tame ; deer and ostriches bounding over the plain ; bearded biscachas (a sort of rabbit) coming out at evening by groups from their thousand burrows which intersect the country : now the whirring partridge flying from under my horse's feet, and anon the little mailed armadillo making haste to get out of the way. Every now and then I came within sight of the splendid Paraná. The town of Rosario is situated on a high precipitous bank which overlooks the river. But its broad, pellucid surface was undisturbed by any bark : its magnificent waters glided down in all the majesty, but all the seclusion of Nature ; for here man has left her almost to herself. I saw a stream two miles broad, and ten feet deep at the place from which I surveyed it ; and that place was 180 miles from the mouth of the Plate, and 2000 from its source. There was no cataract to impede navigation ; no savages sought to interrupt traffic, or required to be driven from the banks. The land on both sides was as fertile as nature could make it ; and offered the impedi-

ment of neither wood nor stones to the plough. The climate was most salubrious, and the soil had been in undisturbed possession of a European power for 300 years. Yet all was still as the grave. On a rapid review of such circumstances, the mind is struck with astonishment on contemplating all that man has failed to do, where Nature told him so plainly how much he might have done.

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

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## LETTER XVII.

To J—— G——, Esq.

*Santa Fé and its Inhabitants—A Letter of introduction in South America—My reception at Santa Fé—Bathing there—Fatigue of travelling.*

*London, 1838.*

SANTA FÉ is situated on the bank of a tributary stream of the great river Paraná. That stream is called the Salado. It has its origin in lat. South,  $24^{\circ} 30'$ , near Salta, the capital of the large province of that name. The Salado irrigates the whole of it, and flowing through that of Tucuman, and a considerable portion of the Great Chaco, falls at length into the Paraná, in lat.  $31^{\circ} 30'$ . The branch of it upon which Santa Fé stands here sweeps round, and comes again into the Paraná, about lat.  $32^{\circ} 20'$ , forming, with this river, a considerable island opposite to Santa Fé.

The town is one of but poor appearance, built after the fashion of all Spanish towns, with a large square in the centre, and eight streets

branching off at right angles from the corners of it. The houses are low roofed, generally of mean exterior, scantily furnished, with the rafters exposed to view, the walls whitewashed, and the brick floors in most cases without either carpet or mat to cover their nakedness. The streets are of loose sand, with the exception of one that is partially paved. The number of inhabitants of the town and suburbs is from four to five thousand.

I arrived just after the siesta-hour, which, during the heat of summer, commences at one, and lasts till five. A very primitive scene presented itself to my view, as, followed by my postilion and servant, on our jaded horses, and in our dusty travelling habiliments, I rode through the narrow streets of the town. Let me premise that the doors of the houses open generally at once from the principal apartment of the habitation upon the street; and where it is not so, a short, but wide passage, entered by a gateway, leads to the quadrangle, on every side of which the rooms are ranged. Each chamber has generally a door opening into this quadrangle, or patio.

Every gate, every door in every patio, every

outlet from every room into the street, was thrown open; and the inhabitants, male and female, in all the luxury of dishabille, were seated at the entrances of their respective dwellings. Those who were on the shady side of the street, sat literally *in* the street; while those from whose houses the rays of the sun had not yet departed, sat within their porch to enjoy the shade. But all were perfectly exposed to public view. The gentlemen were dressed simply in a shirt, and pair of white trousers, with their feet in slippers; while the ladies, on principles of like deference to coolness and comfort, rejoiced in a primitive chemise, a lower vestment, and some loose and transparent upper garment, scarcely at all confining the body.

I saw at a glance that the ladies of Santa Fé were altogether different in their appearance and manners from those of Buenos Ayres.

How do you think the natives were employed, as in the way described, each man, woman, and child sat in the portals, or lounged at the doors, of their houses? They were either smoking cigars, sipping maté (the Paraguay tea) through a tube, or eating water-melons. Some of them

were engaged alternately in all three operations. The streets were strewed with the rinds of their favourite fruit, while the air was redolent of their not less favourite tobacco. Conceive how I must have been shocked to see, for the first time, a great proportion of the ladies, openly and undisguisedly, not only smoking, but smoking cigars of a size so large, that those of their male companions bore no comparison to them. Then followed that act, not to be named in ears polite, so generally connected with smoking. The maté, the melon, the costume, the general coarseness of the scene, I could have overlooked; but the large cigar, in a female mouth, which were it ever so beautiful, could never, from that moment, be considered delicate,—oh! it was a terrible shock to my nerves, not then braced, by habit, to the endurance of a sight so unseemly.

After winding our way through two or three streets, among those motley groups, whose curiosity, like that of all the inhabitants of small towns, seemed anxious to be satisfied as to who the travellers were, we came to a house, better, in appearance, than the generality of those we had hitherto passed. I was told by the postilion



that that was the dwelling of Mr. Aldao; for whom I had a letter of introduction. I alighted, and found his family, like all the rest, seated in the porch, over their water-melons, maté, and cigars. On delivering my credentials, I was most cordially received; and I found here, as I had already experienced in Buenos Ayres, that a letter of introduction, in South America, is no such symbol for a little mere superficial civility as it is in this country. It is there a passport to substantial hospitality; and that in every form in which it can be ministered by kindness, abundance, and welcome, the most single-hearted and unfeigned.

No sooner did Señor Aldao read the contents of my introductory passport from his friend at Buenos Ayres, than the whole family rose from their seats and welcomed me. The slaves were called out; the horses were unsaddled; I was ushered into a room much too spacious for the furniture in it; and I was told it was my bedroom. Here, spirits, wine, biscuits, panales,\* fruit, and cigars, were spread out before me; a

\* Refined sugar, formed into light, transparent, hollow rolls, used for *eau sucrée*.

large silver basin and ewer, with very cool and clear water for ablution, were brought me, while I drank of the same refreshing beverage from an old-fashioned silver tankard. A massive silver maté-cup also graced the table; and the stretcher, or little bedstead, on which my mattress was laid, was covered with sheets like cambric, pillow-cases of fine embroidered lawn, and a crimson damask counterpane. But it could boast of no curtains, neither had the bed-room any wash-hand-stand, but, in lieu of it, a leather-bottomed chair of most antique appearance. There stood by me a tall negress with a napkin depending over her arm, in double folds to the ground. At each extremity it was richly embroidered, and terminated by a deep fringe of the finest lace. The body of the towel (for such lowly office was the splendid napkin intended to perform) was like a thin India crape; and when I asked my attendant where it had been made, she said "in Paraguay."

Having regaled and refreshed myself, I sent my automaton towel-rack out of the room, and changing my traveller's garb, I sallied forth to inspect a little more closely the family of Don

Luis Aldao. He was a bachelor, and lived with his mother, brother, and two sisters. Twilight was just beginning to cast her shades over the Santa Fecinos, and the moon rose in great splendour, as if to show that her silver beams would soon turn the coming night into serenest day. There is a lustre and magnificence, a brilliant yet placid glory in the moonlight of those regions of unclouded sky, and atmosphere uncontaminated by fogs, that to be appreciated must be enjoyed. The family party now, instead of being congregated, as after the siesta, under the porch, was grouped in the patio, and increased by the advent of many friends and neighbours of both sexes. They were all going to bathe in the glassy stream that laves the green-swarded banks by which it gently glides.

Don Luis asked me to accompany them; and though it was certainly new to me, and seemed not a little odd, that I should be invited, with others of my own sex, to accompany the ladies to their bath, I never doubted we were to part company at the water's edge. I, of course, consented to become one of so novel and interesting a party; and forth we sallied. The ladies were attended

by a great many female slaves, bearing their mistresses' wearing apparel.

As we moved onward *en masse*, many was the joke, and loud the laugh, which cheered us on our way. Much too plain and primitive, however, for reiteration, was the language in which the whole conversation was couched. At length the shining river arose upon our view, its waters rippling and dimpling under the dancing beams of the moon. But guess, my friend, if you can, my astonishment, when, on reaching the banks, I heard the Santa Fecino Naiads, who had taken to the stream before our arrival, joking in high glee with the gentlemen who were bathing a little way above them. It is true they were all dressed, the ladies in white robes, and the gentlemen in white drawers; but there was in the exhibition something that ran rather counter to my preconceived notions of propriety and decorum.

As I stood by, I saw the whole inhabitants of Santa Fé (for I suppose scarcely one was left in the houses) carry on their aquatic gambols as familiarly as if they had been whirling through the mazes of a quadrille. Merry-making, revelry,

and laughter were the order of the evening; and yet, from all I heard and saw, during much subsequent intercourse with this people, I verily believe that their bathing diversions were quite as innocent as a Mussulman would think our European ball-room scenes to be. An over-rigid judgment passed by a foreigner on the inhabitants of Santa Fé, because of their mode of bathing, would be as unjustifiable and erroneous, as that of the Mahometan censor on the women of England, France, and America, because, like those in his country, they are not cooped up in the harem.

At length our party emerged from the water. The ladies were dressed with great dexterity by their maids; the bathing-clothes were collected; the hair, the long, beautiful tresses of black hair, which had been kept up with a comb before the bath was taken, now floated in luxuriant abundance over the shoulders, and much under the waists of the Santa Fecinos, as in slow procession they returned to their respective homes. They were careful not to walk too fast, that they might not lose the benefit of their refreshing dip; and when, on arrival at home, they assembled, in

tertulias, at their porches, or in their patios, the hair, like a veil, continued to shroud almost every part of them but their face. They alleged that they could no otherwise have their tresses dried before the hour of rest.

Hereupon a good deal of conversation followed, as to the different habits of the ladies in Santa Fé and those in England; till a call to supper fortunately saved me from the embarrassment of answering some rather puzzling questions.

The evening was closed in (notwithstanding the heat) with a hot supper, abundance of wine, more water-melons, and cigars, of which latter, I am sorry to say, the ladies partook with apparently the greatest relish.

At twelve o'clock we all marched to our several quarters for the night; and of course I to my large empty room, but luxurious bed. There, stretching my wearied limbs, I sank into such an overwhelmingly-sound repose, as you may imagine would overtake a man after he had ridden for nearly four days, under a broiling sun, without the shade of a single tree,—with but scanty rest,—indifferent fare,—and unceasing attacks from a great variety of those venomous insects which

live by their annoyance of man. To one that had been such a martyr, a bed like that at Señor Aldao's was a luxury only to be experienced by those who occupy it at the cost it must be paid for by your Pampa traveller.

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

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## LETTER XVIII.

To J—— G——, Esq.

Candioti, the Entrerios Estanciero.

*London, 1838.*

ONE day, after the siesta-hour, as now half transformed into a Santa Fecino, I was sitting, without jacket or waistcoat, with the family party, under Aldao's porch, there came slowly riding up to us on horseback one of the finest-looking, and most gorgeously-equipped old gentlemen I ever beheld. "There," said Aldao, "comes my uncle Candioti."

I had often heard of Candioti: who had not, that had ever been in that country? He was the very prince of Gauchos, lord of three hundred square leagues of territory, owner of two hundred and fifty thousand head of horned cattle, master of three hundred thousand horses and mules, and of more than half a million of dol-



lars laid up in his coffers, in ounces of gold imported from Peru.

Just returned from one of his excursions into that country, there he sat, on a sleek and powerful bay gelding, the finest animal, decidedly, I had seen in the country. Anything half so splendid as horse and rider, taken together, and with reference to the Gaucho style of equipment in vogue, was certainly not to be found in South America. When the family congratulations on meeting, after a six months' absence, were over, I was introduced to Señor Candioti, and made my bow with all the deference due to so patriarchal a potentate. His manners and habits were alike primitive; and his mode of carrying himself towards others was as unostentatious and courteous, as were his claims to superiority in wealth and station universally admitted.

This prince of the Gauchos was a prince in nothing more than in that noble simplicity which characterized his whole deportment. He was too high in his own sphere of action to fear competition; too independent to condescend to civility for mere personal advantage; and too ingenuous

to admit into his breast a thought of acting the hypocrite.

He continued sitting on his horse, and kept up a familiar chit-chat with all around. Every now and then he lighted his cigar by striking fire with a flint and steel on tinder kept in a polished tip of horn, which was embossed with silver, and had a gold chain attached to it, by which the lid, or rather extinguisher, depended, while the horn was in use. As I looked at him I could not but admire his singularly-handsome face and dignified mien. His small mouth, and strictly Grecian nose; his noble forehead, and fine head thinly strewed with silver locks; his penetrating blue eyes, and countenance as hale and ruddy as if he had spent his days in Norway, instead of riding over the Pampas, were all remarkable. Then, for his attire, according to the style and fashion of the country, it was magnificent. His poncho had been made in Peru, and, beside being of the richest material, was embroidered on a white ground in superb style. Beneath it he wore a jacket of the finest India cloth, covering a white satin waistcoat, which, like his poncho, was beautifully

embroidered, and adorned with small gold buttons, each depending from a little link of chain of the same metal. He had no cravat, and the collar and front of his shirt displayed, upon fine French cambric, the richest specimens of tambouring which could be furnished in Paraguay. His lower vestment was of black velvet, open at the knees, and, like the waistcoat, adorned with gold buttons, depending also from little links of chain, evidently never intended for connexion with the button-holes. From under this part of his dress were to be seen the fringed and tamboured extremities of a pair of drawers, made of the fine Paraguay cloth. They were ample as a Turkoman's trousers; white as the driven snow, and hung down to the calf of the leg, just far enough to show under them a pair of brown stockings, manufactured in Peru from the best Vicuña wool. The potro boots of Señor Candioti fitted his feet and ankles, as a French glove fits the hand, and the tops of them were turned over, so as to give them the air of buskins. To these boots were attached a pair of unwieldy silver spurs, brightly polished. To complete his personal attire, the princely Gaucho

wore a large Peruvian straw hat, with a black velvet band around it, while his waist was girded with a rich crimson sash of silk, serving the treble purpose of riding-belt, braces, and girdle for a huge knife in a morocco sheath, from which protruded a massive silver handle.

Gorgeous as was the apparel of the rider, it was, if possible, outdone by the caparison of his horse. Here all was silver, elaborately wrought and curiously inlaid. The peaks of the saddle, and the complicated head-piece of the bridle, were covered with the precious metal; the reins were embossed with it; and in the manufacture of the stirrups there must have been exhausted all the ingenuity of the best Peruvian silversmith, with at least ten pounds of plata piña (or virgin silver) to work upon. Such, in character and person, was Candiotti, the patriarch of Santa Fé. To complete the sketch of him, I must give you some idea of his extraordinary and successful career in life; of how he became possessed of such a vast extent of territory; and how his flocks and herds increased till they greatly exceeded in number those of Jacob. Like him, Candiotti waxed great and went forward, and

grew until he became very great; and, like Abram, he was rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.

The town of Santa Fé was originally founded about 1563, by a very intrepid soldier, Juan de Garay, at the head of only eighty-six men.

The establishment of a town on that spot was undertaken by order of Martin Saenz de Toledo, then governor of Paraguay, and with a view to extending the conquests and increasing the Indian subjects of Old Spain. In a short time, more than twenty-five thousand natives from the Pampas, Chaco, and other parts, submitted to Garay and his small band; and though many of them afterwards dispersed, and the town was subject to frequent attacks and inroads from hostile tribes of Indians, yet the conquest was maintained, and the settlement gradually increased in strength and numbers.

But it was not till within the last seventy or eighty years that it attained to even its present importance; and to that it reached in a way so connected with Candioti's rise in the world, that its traffic, wealth, and population, such as they are, have run parallel with the fortunes of its

patriarch, and have been essentially owing to his spirit, industry, activity, and indefatigable perseverance.

Having in his youth, with a few mules for sale, made a short excursion into Peru, at a time when the mines of Potosi, and other parts of that country, were yielding a vast produce, Candiotti saw how inadequate to the demand was the supply of those useful animals, for the purpose of conveying ores and merchandise, as well as passengers over a rocky and arid country. Increasing numbers of them were also required for the purpose of carrying the produce of Paraguay to Cordova, Mendoza, San Luis, Tucuman, Salta, and other towns.

Returning to Santa Fé, the sagacious speculator and observer invested the ten thousand dollars earned by his trip, in the purchase of an estate in the Entrerios, about thirty leagues from Santa Fé, on the opposite side of the river Paraná. He determined to give his chief attention to the breeding of mules for exportation to Peru. From this time forward he made an annual journey to that country; and every year a more successful one than that which had preceded. As

he returned periodically to his native town, he regularly invested in new estates, contiguous to the old ones, and in cattle upon them, the whole profit of his year's adventure. At that period of superabundance of land in South America, and indeed up to a much later period, the mode of purchasing an estate was not by paying so much a rood, an acre, a mile, or even a league for it; but simply by paying so much a head for the cattle upon it, and a trifling sum for the few fixtures, such, perhaps, as half-a-dozen mud huts, and as many corrales, in which to shut up the live stock. The general price then paid for each head of horned cattle was two shillings, and for each horse sixpence. An estate of five leagues in length, by two and a half in breadth, that is, of twelve and a half leagues, might have upon it, generally speaking, about eight thousand head of horned cattle, and fifteen thousand horses. The price of it, at the above-mentioned rates, would be,

For 8000 head of horned cattle, at 2s.	£800
15,000 horses, at 6d. . . . .	375
Fixtures . . . . .	100
Cost, therefore, of the stock and fixtures	<u>£1,275</u>

leaving the estate of twelve and a half square leagues, or thirty-seven and a half square miles, as a bonus to the purchaser.

Now, if it be considered that Candiotti's journeys to Peru, becoming every year more profitable, enabled him at last to buy in the year three or four such estates as that described above, it will soon be seen how his landed possessions must have extended; how his horned cattle, his horses, and his mules must have increased and multiplied; and how the man himself must have waxed "exceeding great."

Many other families of Santa Fé followed, at a distance, the example of Candiotti; and at length the town came to supply all Peru with mules. It became, too, the emporium and port of transit for the produce of Paraguay destined for Chile, and Upper as well as Lower Peru; and it extended its influence and increased its wealth by the acquisition of many estates on the Banda Oriental and Entrerios, where most of the mules for exportation were bred.

Candiotti's mode of journeying to Peru with his annual caravan, and with five or six thousand mules, was this:—having brought them from his



estates on the east side of the Paraná, by making them swim, under the direction of many herds, over that vast stream, he collected them into *potreros*, or large paddocks, in the vicinity of Santa Fé, till he had got together the number he required. He then loaded thirty or forty huge waggons with the merchandise most wanted in Peru; and taking with him, under the guidance of his own vigilant eye, five hundred tame oxen to serve as relays in the drawing of these waggons, and his six thousand mules driven, *en masse*, by forty or fifty Gaucho herds, he set his face to the plains, and commenced his journey towards Santiago, Tucuman, and Salta, leaving Cordova to the left. The country, covered with grass, and copiously irrigated by streams, afforded sustenance for his cattle wherever he chose to make halt; and he had to encounter, on his journey, the obstruction of neither ditches nor fences, any more than he had to incur the expense of a single farthing for the maintenance of his numerous cavalcade. Beside his draught bullocks, he had with him a sufficient number of others for daily slaughter as he proceeded; and neither himself nor his men thought farther provision necessary,

than beef, maté, salt, water, and water-melons. None of these, except the salt and maté, could be said to cost Candiotti anything; and these were very cheap. The peons, or herds, had their luxury, equally cheap, of tobacco; but even that was deducted from their wages.

Whenever the caravan came to a halt, the bullocks, being loosed from their yokes, were let out to pasture on the plain; the herd of mules too; and while half the cortège of peons were riding round and round them, to keep them together, the other half were busied in lighting fires upon the sward, roasting beef, boiling water, eating melons, or stretching themselves out under the shade of the waggons, for repose.

At a given hour the refreshed party was sent off to relieve the working one; and when man and beast were sufficiently rested and fed, off again marched the cattle and caravans. In fine moonlight they travelled from evening till morning, and rested during all the hours of solar heat; but when the nights were dark, they necessarily stopped, kindled their fires, and kept, as sailors say, watch and watch over their herds of cattle, as wandering at large, under the inspection

of the peons, they grazed within sight of the numerous fires kindled to prevent their straying far from the spot of encampment.

Candioti was of course the presiding genius of the journey. Sleeping less than any one of his herds, he was ever the last to lie down, and the first to rise. He invariably got up at midnight, and at some other hour of the night or morning, to see that the watches were properly relieved, and the cattle kept compactly together. The whole discipline of this moving camp was not only in accordance with his own precise regulations, but was seldom infringed, because so vigilantly superintended. He would pardon drunkenness in a herd, impertinence (upon an apology made for it), absence, gambling, and even theft; but never was he known to forgive a man whom he once caught asleep when he ought to have been awake.

Some anecdotes are told of him curiously illustrative of the effect produced by this habitual vigilance. He came at last to think it a sort of disgrace that it should be known he slept at all; and every servant he ever had was ready to aver that he had never *seen* his master asleep.

That his wife might not bear testimony against his being guilty of so great a weakness, Candiotti had always a bed-room separate from hers. Two friends of his endeavoured to take him by surprise, by calling on him, the one at two and the other at three o'clock, on different mornings. "Señor Don Francisco," said the first, as he knocked at his door, "are you asleep?" Candiotti was nearly asleep; for, in spite of all his exertions, he did require a little of that refreshment; but, with ears as quick as those of a hare, the moment his friend's first tap saluted them, "No," replied he, "I am thinking what it can be that keeps that last herd of mules so long after their time from arriving." He instantly struck a light from his yesquero, or tinder-box, lit a candle, and, with a cigar in his mouth, opened the door to his friend. He gave him a cigar, asked him to be seated, and without the least remark upon the hour at which he had called, began to talk as a matter of course on the topics interesting to both. The friend now thought it his part to apologize; but Candiotti, cutting him short, said, "You know, my friend, that it is the same thing for me to receive a visit at two o'clock in the

morning, as at noon-day; so there is not the slightest occasion for an apology; pray smoke your cigar."

The second friend, at some interval of time, knocked and said, "Señor Don Francisco" (that was Candioti's christian name), "are you asleep?" "Nada de eso," replied the Prince of the Gau-chos, "pase v. adelante," "not at all, walk in." When his friend walked in, accordingly, Candioti told him that he had just got up to order his horse to be saddled, and that he was going to the potrero to see if the mules and peons were ready for a start the following day.

By his wife Candioti had only one child, a daughter, and she the heiress of all his property and estates. But his illegitimate progeny was so numerous, that most of his estancias were managed by one or more of his sons. I dined with him one day when four of his natural, but not unacknowledged, or dishonoured children were present. Our dinner was most plentiful; the slaves who attended us were numerous; every article in the house, where silver could be used, was made of it: plates, forks, dishes, salvers, ewers, all were of that ore. And yet

there was not a carpet in the whole house; the chairs were common rush-bottom chairs; the tables were of deal, not even painted; the beds were stretchers, with hide bottoms; curtains to them, or sashes for the windows, there were neither; and in the very drawing-room, or sala, there stood upon a horse-rack the whole of Candiotti's horse-gear. The patio of his house was continually filled with capataces (overseers), calling for orders; or with peons bearing messages, and leaving or taking away horses.

In his habits of eating and drinking Candiotti was very abstemious. He seldom drank anything but water and maté, and was moderate at his meals, unless it were occasionally, on the plains, when the irresistible "*carne con cuero*" was placed before him. He never seemed precisely in his element unless when on horseback, and he contrived, whether at home or on his travels, to pass sixteen hours of the twenty-four in his favourite way. He smoked and talked all day; seldom took up a pen, except to write his signature, and never, even by chance, looked into a book. He used to say he knew nobody but priests and lawyers who had any business to do

that ; and he was not at all sure that we did not owe much of the litigation and religious strife in the world to the propensity observable in those two classes of men to pore over books, which he believed to be generally filled with legal cavils and polemical controversy.

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

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## LETTER XIX.

To J—— G——, Esq.

Passage from Santa Fé to the Baxada—the Baxada de Santa Fé—Journey from Santa Fé to Corrientes—Malthusian Economy—One of Candioti's Estancias—the large Partridge—the Ostrich—Wild Horses—Taming of Potros, or Colts—Branding of Cattle—Number of these on Candioti's Estancia.

*London, 1838.*

I PASSED a month among the Santa Fecinos hospitably entertained, according to their fashion, while making observations according to my own. Still there was no word of my little ship, which had left Buenos Ayres some days before me. But the navigation of the River Paraná, “aguas arriba,” that is, against the current, is not the only tedious affair to which those who *will* go against the current in this world must submit.

The vessel had been out forty days, and yet



had not accomplished four hundred miles, that is, not ten miles a day.

As things began to get monotonous at Santa Fé, I bethought me of proceeding on my journey. I bade adieu to the good and primitive people of that place; and being provided with fresh letters of introduction, especially from Candiotti to two of his sons who managed estates of his that lay in my route, I resumed my travelling costume, and, with my weather-beaten, but faithful servant Francisco, embarked in a canoe for the Baxada. We were paddled by six athletic Paraguayans out of the riacho or branch of the Salado on which Santa Fé stands. After gliding over it a distance of about twelve or fourteen miles, we emerged into the noble, the magnificent Paraná. It is here about three miles wide, smooth and clear as crystal, wooded on the west bank, and confined by precipitous barrancas or cliffs on the east. As the Salado comes out below the Baxada, we were obliged to paddle about three miles up the stream before we could venture to cross, without running a risk of being carried down by the current below the point we aimed at making. When we had accomplished

this distance above the site of the Baxada, our little canoe was at once launched into the middle of the current; and making, by the impulse of this, as much way laterally, as by the impetus of the paddles, it shot a-head, we crossed the stream in rapid and gallant style. We attained, within half an hour from the time of our first standing over for the Baxada, that precise point. No sailors in the world could more nicely have calculated, nor with greater precision have executed, the taking of a port in a skiff, and in the face of a rapid current, than did the Paraguayans in their shell of a canoe, liable to be upset by a passenger's moving a little too much either to the right side or the left. I found the port of the Baxada situated at the foot of a very high, but gently sloping cliff. The town, as distinct from the port, stands at the top of this cliff, and hence derives its name "Baxada de Santa Fé" (that is, the descent to Santa Fé). It might have been called the Golgotha of Cattle; for I found it strewed not only with their skulls, but their carcases. It was quite surrounded by slaughter-grounds and corrales; or rather, instead of these *surrounding* the town, they constituted

part of it. The ground was soaked with the blood of the animals; and the effluvia from their offal, from large piles of hides, and from manufactories of tallow, emitted under the hot rays of a burning sun with tenfold intensity, were nearly insupportable. The air over the site of those corrales was almost darkened by birds of prey. Vultures, carrion-crows, and carrion-gulls, hovered, skimmed, and wheeled their flight around the carcasses of the slain. Here were a dozen clamorous assailants fixing their talons, and thrusting their curved beaks into the yet warm flesh of an animal, which had yielded its hide and tallow (all for which it was deemed valuable) to the Gaucho executioners of the matadero. There, so many pigs were contending for mastery in the revels, and close by, some ravenous dogs were usurping and maintaining an exclusive right to the prey. Ducks, fowls, turkeys, all seemed to prefer beef to anything else; and such a cawing, cackling, barking, and screaming, as were kept up by the heterogeneous family of quadrupeds and winged creatures which were voraciously satisfying the cravings of nature, was never heard out of Babel. I

wended my way to the house of the governor ; was received with the pompous, yet awkward decorum of a village chieftain newly elected to office ; got my passport signed ; and in two hours from the time of my landing I left, at a hand-gallop, the carnivorous Baxada.

As I rode along, post-haste, at the rate of twelve miles an-hour, I perceived I had got into a quite different style of country from that which intervened between Buenos Ayres and Santa Fé. There, all was flat, monotonous, with leagues upon leagues of ground covered with thistles eight feet high, and only space enough to ride through their dense, brown, and interminable ranks. Here the country was undulating, verdant, irrigated by frequently-recurring streams, and ever and anon, shaded, as well as adorned, by woods of the algarroba-tree. The herds of cattle were much more extensive, the horses finer, the peasantry more athletic than on the western bank of the Paraná ; and though there were not here, any more than there, either fences, cultivation, or other signs of human industry ; though the thinly-scattered habitations were mere mud huts, and their half-clothed inhabitants little

removed from savage life, yet the whole air of the country was more cheering and exhilarating. As I rode over its apparently interminable extent of hill and dale, diversified with all the beauties, and all the riches of nature, I could not help considering what a magnificent land it must some day become. I longed already to see the immense herds of sleek and lowing cattle which covered the uninterrupted pastures, shut up within closer limits, and making way for the stately city, the busy town, the rural village, and the various occupations of the agriculturist, the merchant, and the artizan. I could not but stand aghast at the theory of political economists, who would persuade us that the world is over-peopled, and that a bountiful God has not provided sufficient means of subsistence for his dependent creatures. How could I do otherwise than smile at the fanciful arithmetical calculations of Malthusian philosophers, who tell us that in a given number of years, a process of human extermination from want of the necessities of life, must take place, in order to leave food and raiment for *their* given and limited number of earth's inhabitants ?

At the end of my second day's journey, I reached one of Candiotti's best estancias, on the Arroyo Hondo, or deep rivulet; and there I alighted for the night. On presenting my credentials from the veteran Gaucho, I was received by one of his numerous off-shoots, with all the overflowing hospitality of the country. He inhabited only a mud-hut, containing three apartments, and forming, with two or three out-houses, one side of an unfinished square. Another side and a half of this square was occupied by the huts, small, and lowly enough, of the five-and-forty peons, or herds who superintended the thirty thousand head of cattle, and some fifty thousand horses and mules on the estate. Around this little colony were four most spacious corrales, or enclosures for the cattle, and one for sheep. With Selkirk, Candiotti's son might have said, "I am master of all I survey." Every lineament of his fine countenance betrayed his sire. In his father's own patriarchal style, Candiotti's son received me at his lowly porch. The sun was just setting in the horizon; the numerous herds were drawing up, and lowing, as they came from the water to the corrales; an uncount-

able flock of sheep was bleating in the distance, as, guided by one herd, and a dozen sagacious dogs—they, too, came to their place of repose for the night.

The feathered tribe of domestic fowls were cackling to their roost; and the pigeons, wheeling their last flight for the day, were gathering around the dove-cot. The deep-toned voices of the herds, as they rode round the cattle, came undulating on the breeze from afar; while the plaintive note of the partridge, which abounded all around, chimed in, and made part of the rural harmony of the close of day.

Many were the victims destined to furnish the supper, which Candiotti's son now gave orders to prepare. The fatted calf was killed to supply *carne con cuero*; down from the perch were brought three pullets, for the olla and the spit; three brace of just-fledged doves were devoted to the stew-pan; a bleating lamb was bound to the stake;—"And now," said the son of Candiotti, "*vamos á agarrar unas perdices*,"—"let us go, and catch some partridges." You have heard of partridges being *shot*, but how they are *caught* in those countries, you are perhaps not aware.

We walked about five hundred yards from the house, followed by two Gauchos on horseback. Each of them had in his hand a small whip. Presently we saw scores of partridges, just peeping with their small heads above the grass. The Gauchos rode towards the first two they observed, and leaning half way down the sides of their horses, commenced by describing with their whips a pretty large circle around the birds; while these, with anxious eye, followed the movement. Gradually the magic circle was lessened, and the enchanted partridges were more and more afraid of trying to make their escape from it. They became stupified, and the peons closing in with them, by a sudden and dexterous jerk of the whip, knocked them on the head. The little innocents were then, *not bagged* (because the Gauchos had no such receptacle for game), but they were strung, one by one, on a small leathern thong; till six brace, in about fifteen minutes, being taken in this way, home we came with the sport. Poor partridges! they had come to their death, not by the legitimate means of powder and shot, but, terror-stricken by a magical spell, they were felled by the unexpected blow of a



Gaucha's whip. In England, beef and mutton must be kept a week, and game ten days, before they are eaten. Not so in South America; for the partridges which had been taken ten minutes before, the fatted calf, the pullet and the pigeons, which had bidden adieu to the world that afternoon, were all, in different ways, under process of cooking: they were all, two hours afterwards, partaken of; and we found them delicate, tender, excellent. How this is I do not know; but such is the fact. A deal table was covered with a splendidly-tamboured table-napkin; most of the supper utensils were of silver; sparkling water glittered in a crystal caraff; wine, water-melons, peaches, honey, and cigars, stood upon a side-table; and, after a two hours' repast, I stretched myself upon a luxurious, albeit uncurtained bed, and slept soundly until the dawn of day.

You must not run away with the idea, however, that we were seated in anything like an English dining-room. The floor of our apartment was of mud; so were the walls. The thatch of the roof was but too apparent. Here, in one corner, stood my bed,—there, in another, lay

strewed the cumbrous saddle-gear of three or four horses. In two large earthen pitchers stood the water; and the copper-coloured servants that waited on us were dressed in half naked Indian simplicity. We had change of neither knives, plates, nor forks. Candioti junior, his head capataz, or overseer, and the curate of a neighbouring capilla, ate off the same dish. The chairs were antiquated leather-bottomed chairs, with backs five feet high from the ground. The door stood open, with half a dozen horses saddled, and tied to stakes around it. No pictures graced the walls; no sashes, nay, not even shutters, protected the windows, nor did glass make a part of them. Everything around us, even our savoury and abundant cheer, bespoke that we were supping with a nomadic chief. His welcome was primitive and hearty; his wealth consisted in flocks and herds; and his domestic arrangements were rough and simple as the habits of the master. All bore evidence of the distance at which we were from modern luxury and refinement. The basin in which, like the Jews, we washed hands after meals, was carried round by a *China* or Indian female

servant ; and a tall mulatto, taking off my boots, struck the adhesive clay from them, and put them down by the side of my bed, by way of intimation that this was all I had to expect in the way of cleaning my boots. Just as the day began to dawn, a maté and cigar were brought to me by Candioti junior ; the saddle-gear was carried out of the room, and put on the backs of several magnificent horses, which stood ready at the door to be saddled ; and in ten minutes, Candioti, his capataz, my servant, and eight peons, followed by six large dogs, were mounted, and ready to ride the round of the estancia, in order that I might see a little into the detail of its management, and get an idea of the extent of its surface.

Off we started, like so many Arabs, our spirits rising as our horses warmed. The partridge rose whirring from under our feet ; the antelope and the fawn bounded off before us ; the screaming tirutero, or horned plover, skimmed the air around us ; the ostrich started from her eggs, and with brawny limbs, and outspread wings, defied the horse's speed.

Up rose the large partridge\*; and here the exhilarating sport of the day commenced. No sooner had this noble bird commenced its perpendicular flight, than Candioti junior, and every

\* The large partridge of South America is about the size of a plump barn-door fowl. When it rises, this partridge takes a perpendicular flight of about forty feet, and then darts off with prodigious velocity in a direction undeviatingly horizontal. When shot, in this latter direction of its flight (and no sportsman would attempt to shoot it, till it went thus off before him), it falls with such a headlong and precipitate impulse, as to make it bound to some distance from the spot at which it first touches the ground. Of all the shooting I ever saw, grouse—woodcock—pheasant—black-cock—partridge—snipe—ptarmigan—there is none equal, in intensity of delight and excitement, to this of the large South American partridge. He is called, *par excellence*, “perdiz grande,” or large partridge. His scent is so strong, that from the moment your dog comes upon it, the agitation of his frame is all but hysterical. The bird, before he will rise, runs at a prodigious rate, and if your dog, in coming upon him, as an English dog does when he has traced a covey, should stop and lie down, you would never get a shot. The bird is off the moment his quick ears, or his natural instinct has told him his pursuers are near; not off by flight, but by a race which commences in suspicion and fear, and terminates in absolute precipitation. So that for the chance of shooting your bird, you are obliged to encourage your dog to go in upon him, to follow up yourself the game with unintermitting alacrity, and to pay, with palpitating satisfaction, after perhaps a ten minutes’ run, for the achievement of bringing down, in all his irresistible career of flight, the goodly prize you have so breathlessly pursued. I shipped four of these birds, under the hope of intro-

peon in his train, put spurs to their horses, leant down on their necks, hallooed on the dogs; and "Vamos, Señor Don Juan," said he to me, "atras de la perdiz:" "let us be off after the partridge." The horses followed the partridge's flight, and almost at his speed; the dogs, with loud-tongued music, followed the horses; every man put his hand to his mouth, in rapid and reiterated motion, till the welkin rang with the loud-mouthed din of riders and of dogs. There was no need for the huntsman's horn; it would have been drowned in the loud, yet not inharmonious concert of our hunting-band. At a quicker pace than that at which I ever followed the fox, did we follow the "perdiz grande." The eagle eyes of the Gaucho pursuers were upon him, till, after a flight of about three minutes, they *marked* him down. Up to the spot came horses and dogs, panting as they reached it. In a moment, the scent was taken into the nostrils of the now eager hounds. The partridge was on the run. His

ducing the breed into this country; but they lingered, notwithstanding every precaution, in an unhealthy state when they came into a cold climate, and died in the Channel. Still I think they might be introduced, and they would be a very great acquisition to the English sportsman.

pursuers traced his rapid steps with the certainty of instinct; and as they did so, the riders were kept at a slow trot. It was the "check," so to speak, in the chase; and as every moment the bird was expected again to rise, and as the dogs drew close and more closely upon his track, the excitement became extreme. The hounds were in indescribable agitation: the peons, Candioti junior, and myself, were breathless under it. Up, at last, flew the frightened, ponderous, and pursued bird. Its second flight was shorter and more feeble than the first—more animated became the pursuit of huntsmen and of dogs. Once more followed up, and once more "marked down," the partridge took its *third* and shortest flight; and then, like the weeping stag, unable to proceed farther, it gave itself into the hands of its pursuers. We took it up, overcome with fatigue and panting with fear; but, being like other sportsmen, too intent on our own pleasure to think much of our victim's pain, we were at once comforted and pleased to see the object of our pursuit, anxiety, and recreation, dangling by a thong at the saddle-peak of one of the Gauchos. We had in this way taken three brace of birds,

when an ostrich starting before us, Candioti junior gave the war-whoop of pursuit to his Gaucho followers, and to me the now well-known intimation of "Vamos, Señor Don Juan." Off went, or rather flew, the Gauchos; my steed bounded away in their company; and we were now, instead of tracking an invisible bird through tufted grass, in full cry after the nimble, conspicuous, and athletic ostrich. With crest erect, and angry eye, towering above all herbage, our game flew from us, by the combined aid of wings and limbs, at the rate of sixteen miles an hour.

The chase lasted half of that time; when an Indian peon, starting ahead of the close phalanx of his mounted competitors, whirled his bolas\*, with admirable grace and dexterity, around his head, and, with deadly aim, flung them over the

\* The bolas, next to the lazo, are the Gaucho's most formidable weapon. They consist of three round heavy stones, each about the size of a large orange, covered with hide, and attached to three plaited thongs, which diverge from each other, and from a common centre, every thong being about five feet in length. These when thrown with unerring aim, as they almost invariably are, at the legs of an animal at his full speed, twist and entangle themselves around them, and bring him with a terrible impulse to the ground. The Gaucho then runs in upon him, and either secures or kills him.

half-running, half-flying, but now devoted ostrich. Irretrievably entangled, down came the giant bird, rolling, fluttering, panting. Being in an instant despatched, the company of the field stripped him of his feathers, stuck them in their hats and girdles, and left the plucked and mangled carcass in the plain, a prey to the vultures, which were already hovering around him.

We now came upon an immense herd of wild horses, and Candiotti junior said, "Now, Señor Don Juan, I must show you how we tame a colt." So saying, the word was given for pursuit of the herd; and off, once more, like lightning, started the Gaucho horsemen, Candiotti and myself keeping up with them. The herd consisted of about two thousand horses, neighing and snorting, with ears erect and flowing tails, their manes outspread to the wind. Off they flew, affrighted the moment they were conscious of pursuit. The Gauchos set up their usual cry; the dogs were left in the distance; and it was not till we had followed the flock at full speed, and without a check for five miles, that the two headmost peons launched their bolas at the horse which each had respectively



singled out of the herd. Down to the ground, with frightful somersets, came two gallant colts. The herd continued its headlong flight, leaving behind their two prostrate companions. Upon these the whole band of Gauchos now ran in; lazos were applied to tie their legs; one man held down the head of each horse, and another the hind quarters; while, with singular rapidity and dexterity, other two Gauchos put the saddles and bridles on their fallen, trembling, and nearly frantic victims. This done, the two men who had brought down the colts bestrode them as they still lay on the ground. In a moment, the lazos which bound their legs were loosed, and at the same time a shout from the field so frightened the potros, that up they started on all fours, but to their astonishment each with a rider on his back, riveted, as it were, to the saddle, and controlling him by means of a never-before-dreamt-of bit in his mouth.

The animals made a simultaneous and most surprising vault: they reared, plunged, and kicked; now they started off at full gallop, and anon stopped short in their career, with their heads between their legs, endeavouring to throw

their riders. "Que esperanza."—"vain hope indeed!" Immoveable sat the two Tape Indians; they smiled at the unavailing efforts of the turbulent and outrageous animals to unseat them; and in less than an hour from the time of their mounting, it was very evident who were to be the masters. The horses did their very worst; the Indians never lost either the security or the grace of their seats; till after two hours of the most violent efforts to rid themselves of their burthen, the horses were so exhausted, that, drenched in sweat, with gored and palpitating sides, and hanging down their heads, they stood for five minutes together panting and confounded. But they made not a single effort to move. Then came the Gaucho's turn to exercise his more positive authority. Hitherto he had been entirely upon the defensive. His object was simply to keep his seat, and tire out his horse. He now wanted to move him in a given direction. Wayward, zigzag, often interrupted was his course at first. Still the Gauchos made for a given point; and they advanced towards it; till at the end of about three hours the now mastered animals moved in nearly a direct line,

and in company with the other horses, to the *puesto*, or small subordinate establishment on the estate, to which we were repairing. When we got there, the two horses, which so shortly before had been free as the wind, were tied to a stake of the *corràl*,—the slaves of lordly man ; and all hope of emancipation was at an end.

At the *puesto*, or small out-house of the estate to which we now came, they were busy branding the cattle. About a thousand oxen and yearlings were shut up in a large *corràl*, and five or six peons with their *lazos* were tumbling them over one by one. The moment a Gaucho, appointed to keep a couple of red-hot brands in readiness, saw an animal down, up he ran and indelibly stamped upon his hind quarter the initials F. C., standing for Francisco Candiotti. From that time, wherever the branded animal might go, he was claimable by the real owner. Even his hide, if stripped from him by a thief or marauder, was, unless the original brand was overlaid by a counter-brand of the seller, liable to be taken, *vi et armis*, by F. C. When cattle or horses are sold, therefore, in order to render the sale legal, or the possession secure, the

"contra-marca," or counter-mark of the vender must be affixed over the original one. After this, the *purchaser's* mark is branded on the beast; so that every animal sold in South America is subjected *at least* thrice to the ordeal of branding. I have seen the hind-quarters of some of the finest horses in the country rendered absolutely deformed by the cruel and oft-repeated process.

A friend of mine once bought a horse in Buenos Ayres without this precaution; and as we were riding out one morning, three athletic Gauchos came up to us. They unceremoniously jostled my friend off his seat; claimed, and one of them took possession of the horse, on the plea of its having his mark upon it. While galloping off with the animal, saddle, bridle, and all, it was in vain that my unhorsed and discomfited friend called aloud in his Anglo-Spanish dialect—"Toma Cavallo, but spera, spera the saddello." "Take the horse, but leave, do leave me the saddle." The saddle was five times the value of the horse; but my friend never afterwards saw saddle, Gaucho, or horse.

The puesto from which we now set out, to return home, was distant about three leagues

from Candioti's house. Of such puestos he had five on this one estate, of which the extent was about thirty-six square leagues; that is, four leagues in front, by nine in depth. The number of tame cattle (*de rodéo*) upon it was about twenty-five thousand, and of wild, or *alzado* cattle, about six or eight. The horses were computed at forty thousand. Of the tame cattle, the proprietor could slaughter one-fourth in the year, and still go on increasing his stock. The mode of slaughtering the wild cattle is singular. The animals retire into the woods to sleep; and on moonlight nights a number of peons come quietly upon them, as they lie on the grass, stab them on the spot, and leave them till next day. The peons then return, flay the animal, and carry away its tallow and skin. These alone were, at the time of which I speak, of any value; and so the carcase was left on the spot on which it was slain, to be devoured by the vultures and wild dogs. Of the latter there are large droves constantly scouring the country in search of food, which they generally get in the woods, or in the vicinity of the corrales.

Returning to the house of Candioti, junior, to

dinner, I once more partook of his abundant hospitality ; and after sleeping a siesta, for which both the dinner and the fatiguing sports of the day were an excellent preparation, I started, in the cool of the afternoon, once more on my journey to Paraguay.

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

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## LETTER XX.

To J—— G——, Esq.

Route from Santa Fé to Corrientes—the Rivers Paraguay, Paraná and Plate—Solitude of so fine a country—Corrientes—Hammocks—Females of Corrientes.

*London, 1838.*

CORRIENTES is distant from Santa Fé a hundred and sixty leagues, and is situated in  $27^{\circ} 30'$  south latitude. The post-office huts, at which you change horses, are at the distance of five leagues from each other; the horses are excellent; the relays are obtained more expeditiously than on the west side of the river; and many of the post-houses are estancias, where the fare is always abundant, and the hospitality invariable. On the whole route, between the Bajada and Corrientes, there are only two small villages,—Goya and Santa Lucia,—the one a considerable emporium for hides, and the other a small Indian establishment containing about two hundred inhabitants, and superintended by a curate and

two friars. I rode into Corrientes at noon of the sixth day from that of my leaving the Bajada. The town is beautifully situated at the very confluence of the rivers Paraná and Paraguay, which are both here magnificent. The former river, having its source in the southern part of the Brazilian province of Goyaz, flows down from latitude 18° south, still increased, as it runs, by numerous tributary springs. It is uninterrupted in its course by any obstacle to navigation, except by that formidable one, called the Salto Grande,\* which, in latitude 24°, with a noise and tumult, heard many miles off, dashes its foaming mass of water over rocks, precipices, and chasms of the most stupendous character. Resuming after this its placid course, the wide and glassy Paraná, richly wooded on both sides, and navigable by small vessels, pours down its salubrious waters impregnated with sarsaparilla, till, at Corrientes, it forms its junction with the river Paraguay. From that point the two rivers joined go under the name of the one river Paraná, the latter being, sometimes, though erroneously, below this, considered the

\* The Great Waterfall, *literally*, the Great Leap.



parent stream. The Paraná discharges itself into the River Plate, by several mouths; by that of the Paraná Guazú, at which point the waters of the Uruguay also fall in; of the Paraná Miní, lower down; and of the Paraná de las Palmas, nearer still to Buenos Ayres. Thus formed, the mighty Rio de la Plata pours its accumulated waters into the Atlantic; and although its mouth at the two opposite capes of Santa Maria and San Antonio is one hundred and fifty miles wide, it does no more than correspond to the grandeur of the inland navigation.

From its source, in Matto Grosso, latitude Miles.

14° south, till its confluence with the Paraná at Corrientes, the river Paraguay has already run a course of . . . 1200

From Corrientes to Buenos Ayres, the distance measured by both these streams under the one name of the Paraná is . . . 750

While from Buenos Ayres to Capes St. Antonio and Maria, the combined waters of the Paraguay, Paraná, and Uruguay, united under the one name of River Plate, run a farther distance of . . . 200

Making a total course of . . . 2150

including the windings, which are often of a very sweeping kind.

Of this immense tract of water, fifteen hundred miles are navigable by vessels drawing ten feet. The river abounds with fish from its mouth to its source. The pexerey (king's fish), the dorado, mullet, pacū (a sort of turbot), and many others, are found in it; its banks are for the most part richly studded with wood; its various islands are adorned with beautiful shrubs, evergreens, creepers, &c.; the woods abound with game, and the adjacent country teems with cattle. The waters are highly salubrious; the soil all along the banks of the river, with the exception of the Great Chaco, is rich and fertile in the highest degree: but notwithstanding all these advantages; notwithstanding that the country has been for three hundred years in the possession of a civilized European nation; after I had galloped two hundred and eighty leagues, I did not see above four or five small towns. Not more than a like number of vessels were to be descried on my route, while at every fifteen miles' distance a miserable hut, with its half-dozen inhabitants, was alone interposed to relieve the monotony of

the scene. From this charge you may except, as you would the oasis in the desert, the relaxation afforded by my residence at Santa Fé, and by my day's good living and rural revelry at Candiotti's estancia. The secret of all the silence, solitude, and abandonment of Nature to herself which I saw and lamented, is of course to be traced to the inadequate means which have hitherto been used to provide even a semblance of the population necessary to cover a country of such vast fertility and extent.

When I reached Corrientes, just at noon, which is there the dinner-hour, I proceeded to the house of M. Perichon, a Frenchman, for whom I had brought a letter of introduction from his sister, Madame O'Gorman, the favourite of the Viceroy Liniers.

I found that the lady had procured for her brother the appointment of post-master general of the province, and that he was, as such, no small personage in Corrientes. With the exception, however, of a huge quantity of snuff, that bestrewed the post-master general's upper lip, and gave a Lundyfoot tinge to all that region of his countenance, together with the remains of

a Parisian bow, I could discover nothing that distinguished him from the Correntino. When my travelling cortège drew up in front of the house, and I delivered my credentials from his sister, I was received with the utmost cordiality. As a matter of course, M. Perichon's house became, for the time being, my own.

At the time of my arrival, the heat was all but insupportable. Not a soul was to be seen in the streets of loose and burning sand. The cows, which wander up and down these streets during the morning and evening, were melting under the trees, or seeking shelter from the sun on the shady side of the tall prickly-pear hedges, which enclose the gardens or folds attached to the houses. The fowls and other feathered tribes were panting among the branches. Even the buzzing mosquito was still; and the only tenant of the air abroad was the restless butterfly. I was nearly dead from thirst and heat, and covered with dust from top to toe. The horses, as we dismounted, hung down their heads, and were bathed in sweat. They breathed hard and fast, showing every symptom of thorough exhaustion.

The houses in Corrientes (especially the better

class of them) are built with lofty and capacious corridors, and upon a considerable elevation. The inhabitants have thus both shade and air; and it will take no persuasion to convince those who have been in hot climates, what luxuries these are. But these luxuries are enjoyable in summer only very early in the morning, and after siesta-hours in the evening. From ten o'clock A.M. till five P.M., the houses are shut up and darkened as much as possible, in order to exclude the burning air and glare of light which then prevail. A little mitigation is thus procured of the intense heat of that part of the day. The family, in their hours of retirement, throw off, as regards dress, all restraint, and all effort as regards work. Expecting no visitants, and not standing on ceremony if they come, the inmates of the house doff their upper garments, and walk about, the women in a chemise and petticoat, with a loose kerchief about the neck; the men in an open-breasted shirt and trousers, the sleeves of the former rolled up to the elbows. They either swing in their hammocks, walk in listlessness, or flap themselves with fans made of straw.

At the house of the post-master general, I found

the inmates all cloistered after this fashion ; and the great room in which they were about to sit down to dinner had to me, who had just come out from under the fiery rays of the sun, all the appearance of total darkness. But the large folding-door, which conducted into the patio, shaded with orange-trees, having been partially opened, my eyes recovered their powers of vision ; and there they fell on a domestic circle of a truly primeval appearance. M. Perichon, who had entered before me, was reading my letter, with a half-naked child on either arm. On the estrada, or raised part of the floor, covered with a straw mat, sat three ladies, whom I afterwards found to be his wife, and two sisters-in-law, one married, the other not. With a child on his arm, Perichon's brother-in-law, a remarkable gigantic and fine figure, walked about the room. A female mulatto slave, of beautiful form and features, was rocking a cradle, in which a baby was sobbing aloud ; and three other slaves were bringing in dinner, and laying it on an unwieldy timber-table, covered, however, with a rich cotton cloth of the country manufacture. A large earthen jar of water, and abundance of horse furniture, stood

in a corner of the room ; several maté cups, a bottle of aguardiente (spirits), and wine-glasses were on a side-table ; all parties had been smoking, and all were in family dishabille. I was once more cordially welcomed by Perichon ; and by the ladies with a profusion of compliments, of which I understood not more than half. For here, the language of the aborigines, or Guaranis, has superseded, in a great measure, the Spanish, and, excepting the better classes of men, few speak that language with either fluency or propriety. The females almost invariably speak it with difficulty and dislike, preferring much the Guarani idiom, in which they are very eloquent. It is accompanied, however, with a tone and twang which render it anything but musical.

Dinner was a little delayed : I refreshed myself with copious ablutions and libations, and sat down to the usual sumptuous and abundant fare, quite "*en famille*." The custom in Corrientes, instead of *dressing* for dinner, is to *undress* for it ; and if any one wishes to know how much this breach of the European custom is better than the observance, let him go to a country in 26° latitude, and sit down there to dinner, of a summer's noon.

After dinner followed the siesta, which instead of being here slept, as in Santa Fé and Buenos Ayres, on a bed, is enjoyed in a magnificent hammock. This hammock is woven of fine cotton ; it is eight feet long, five in breadth, and in the middle is worked with stitches so large as to admit the air at every aperture. It is gorgeously fringed, all round the edges ; and it is hung so as to subtend an angle of the room. A silken cord or ribbon is put into your hands ; by the pulling of which you swing at a curve as ample as you please. You soon fall asleep, and sink into oblivion of the melting atmosphere in which you are. Then, when you awake, come the cigar and the maté, or the coffee. They are handed to you, while yet in your hammock, by a female domestic. The female mulatto slaves are particularly handsome in Corrientes ; their dress is as white as snow, simple as their habits, and after providing for decency, is airy and light, in compliance with the demands of the climate. The bosom is merely covered by a chemise ; and the contour of it, without the aid of stays, is exhibited simply by this chemise being tied round the waist by a gaily-coloured band. Slaves and



the lower class of white females go invariably without shoes or stockings: they keep their small feet and ankles scrupulously clean; and in this process they are materially aided by the sandy soil of their native land, and by the springs and brooks which intersect it. The well-turned arms are left bare nearly from the shoulder downwards; and the long dark hair is simply braided back from the forehead and gathered up with a comb behind. This is the house-dress. The addition to it, when the women go out, is a manta, or scarf, still of white cotton cloth, and which, being pinned to the hair on the top of the head, is crossed over the bosom, and left to hang loosely on the body.

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

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## LETTER XXI.

To J—— G——, Esq.

Entrance into Paraguay—Character of the Country—Paraguayan  
Hospitality—Don Andres Gomez—The Scotch Serjeant—  
The Cottage of Leonardo Vera.

*London, 1838.*

AFTER having received as much hospitality from the inhabitants of Corrientes as I had from those of Santa Fé, I bade adieu to the household of Perichon, and to a whole *posse comitatus* of his friends, both lay and clerical. I crossed that evening the Paraná at the Paso del Rey; slept at Curupaíti, and early next morning entered the village of Ñeembucú. Here I was received by the commandant and curate with the usual hospitality. Both became subsequently my intimate friends; and some specimens of the correspondence of the former, which we preserve, are such rare models in their way of epistolary style, as well to merit a place in print. You shall have a translation of one or two of the commandant's letters, if we can find room for them.

Ñeembucú is the first establishment or comandancia to which, on the line of road that I travelled, you come in Paraguay. I was now in the country, properly so called; hemmed in by the river Paraguay on one hand, and by the Paraná on the other. As I proceeded onwards to Assumption, just skirting the territory of the Misiones, till I crossed the river Tibiquari, in lat  $26^{\circ} 30'$ , I soon recognised a striking difference between the character of the country in which I now was, and that of any part over which I had hitherto travelled.

The open Pampa was exchanged for the shady grove; the pastures, protected by the trees, and irrigated by abundant streams, were in most places beautifully green; the palm-tree was a frequent occupant of the plain; hills, and more gently-sloping eminences, contrasted beautifully with the valley and the lake. Wooded from the base to the top, those hills and slopes exhibited now the stately forest-tree, and anon the less-aspiring shrub, the lime, and the orange, each bearing, at the same time, both blossom and fruit. The fig-tree spread its broad dark leaf, and offered its delicious fruit to the traveller without money and without price; while the

parasite plant lent all its variety of leaf and flower to adorn the scene. Pendent from the boughs of many of the trees was to be seen, and yet more distinctly known by its fragrance, the air-plant. Squirrels leaped, and monkeys chattered among the branches; the parrot and parroquet, the pheasant, the moigtû, the toocan, the humming-bird, the guacamayo or cockatoo, and innumerable others described by Azara, inhabited, in all their gaudy variety of plumage, the woods through which I rode.

There is one noble bird which tenants them, that I never elsewhere saw, except on the lake or on its banks. That bird is the pato real, or royal duck, nearly the size of a goose, but of plumage rich and varied. The lakes are covered with wild fowl, the marshes with water-hens and snipes. On the pasture-grounds you have the large partridge, and on the cultivated enclosures, in great abundance, the small one, or quail.

As I pursued my journey through a country so substantially favoured, and so highly adorned by Nature, I was glad to meet with much more frequent traces of cultivation and industry than were to be found in the solitary tracts over which

I had heretofore sped my monotonous way. Whitewashed cottages often peeped from among the trees, and around them were considerable fields of the cotton, yucca, and tobacco plants. The Indian corn and sugar-cane were also frequently to be seen in the vicinity of farm-houses of a better character than the cottages; and there was abundance of wood, and of the prickly-pear. With the latter the cultivated country, as well as the potreros or paddocks, were invariably well fenced.

I was much struck by the amazing simplicity and urbanity of the inhabitants. At the first cottage at which I stopped for the night (and it was one of the better class), I asked, as I alighted, for a little water. It was brought to me in an earthen jug by the master of the house, who stood in the most respectful attitude, with his hat in hand, while I drank. It was in vain that I requested him to be covered: he would not listen to my remonstrance; and I saw, in the course of the evening, that his male children were all trained to a similar observance. The female ones respectfully crossed their arms over their bosoms, as they waited on either their parents or strangers while they ate and drank.

Here, as in Corrientes, among the class to which my hospitable landlord belonged, the Spanish language was little and reluctantly spoken by the men, and by the women scarcely at all. It had been almost superseded by the Guarani. Most of the women were ashamed to show their deficiency in Spanish; while the men had a great aversion to express inadequately and awkwardly in that language what they could so fluently and even rhetorically do in their own. Like all primitive languages, the Guarani is susceptible of a great deal of metaphorical embellishment.

I had, fortunately, with me now a young gentleman of the name of Gomez, whom I had appointed at Buenos Ayres as supercargo of my ship, and who, after a tedious navigation of two months, joined me at Corrientes. From thence he came with me in the capacity of travelling companion, interpreter, and guide. He was a native of Assumption; of a good family there; well educated; a thorough master both of the Spanish and Guarani; acquainted with the customs and manners of his countrymen, and therefore well qualified to pioneer me into a remote land, deserving certainly of observation, but hitherto (I mean at the

time of my first going to it) unvisited by any British subject. I must except, indeed, the visit to it of a Scotch serjeant, who, having deserted from General (now Lord) Beresford's army, had forgotten, when I first saw him, his mother-tongue. He was never able to acquire either the Spanish or the Guarani, so he compounded, in his confused head, and uttered with a stammering tongue, a jargon of four languages (English, Scotch, Spanish, and Guarani), and was just intelligible, after frequent repetitions, stammerings, circumlocutions, and elucidations.

To return to the cottage, at which I was now sojourning, I will give you a description of it and of its inmates, and leave you "*ex hoc discere omnes.*"

The Paraguayans are full of urbanity; and the following anecdote will illustrate, in some measure, this fact.

They had, of course, a great prejudice against the English *as a nation*, not only from their being "heretics," but from their having besieged Montevideo, of which a considerable portion of the garrison was composed of Paraguay troops. The kind host, by whom I was so respectfully entertained, having made one of the Paraguayan

detachment which defended that fortress, knowing me to be an Englishman, desiring his family to be made acquainted with the fact, and yet unwilling to let me suspect he was speaking of me, did it in the following way. In the Guarani there is no term for *Englishman*; and those who speak that language designate him, therefore, by the Spanish synonyme, "Inglés." Now, my host was aware that if he made use of this word, I should necessarily infer that he was talking of me. He therefore told those around him, in Guarani (and thus avoided the use of the word "Inglés"), that I was a countryman of those who threw balls into Montevideo. This I learnt afterwards from my interpreter Gomez.

I had been struck, as I approached the house, by a singular erection immediately near it. The trunks of four palm-trees, about twenty feet in height, were driven as stakes into the ground, at intervals which constituted a square of about twenty feet. Between each palm-tree there was an intermediate post of equal height, supporting rafters which formed the frame-work of the roof. Over this were spread coarse straw mats of Indian manufacture. The place had the appearance of



a high stage, and there was connected with it a long ladder, reaching from the ground to the roof. We supped plentifully upon milk, yucca-root, honey, and a full grown lamb, roasted entire. Immediately after supper, the numerous family of our host came up to him, and raising their closed hands, in the attitude of prayer, said in Guarani, "Your blessing, my father." The old man moved his hand, so as to describe with it the figure of a cross, and said to each of his offspring in succession, "God bless you, my son," or "my daughter," as the case might be. He had a family of nine children, of whom the oldest, a fine young woman, as fair as a European, might be twenty-two; and the youngest, a little Paraguay Gaucho, about eight. They did the same homage afterwards to their mother, and received from her a similar benediction. Great was my delight in seeing realized, by the children of modern days, this patriarchal homage to their parents: and not less was my surprise, when immediately afterwards I saw them mounting, one by one, up the steep ladder to the top of the stage, and there, after unloosing their slender garments, lying down to repose for the night, Gomez told me that *we*

There was no toilet preparation made at this time: that was managed at the brook five hours afterwards. Down went the ladder, down went the no-longer recumbent members of the family; and strangers too; lowing from the corral went forth the cattle, and bleating from their fold the sheep; the cocks crowed; the dogs frisked; the young women went to milk the cows, the young men to saddle the horses; and Gomez and myself, with our servant and postilion, to see our travelling equipments put in order. In one moment a scene of the deepest repose was converted into one of the most stirring bustle and rural activity. We took our maté, a jar of warm milk, and a cigar, and in less than an hour from the time of our waking, we were once more *en route* for Assumption. We first, however, bade a hearty and grateful adieu to our exemplary host. We had never seen the man before: he knew nothing of me, but that I belonged to a hostile nation, that a very few years before had invaded his country; and yet he entertained me and my suite upon principles of open-handed hospitality, which scorning the notion of reward, were only satisfied by the giving of his own and

of his children's personal and respectful attendance upon his guests. Nor was this a partial case. I found it the same throughout the country; and while I cannot, in justice to its single-hearted inhabitants, but state this general fact, I can still less, in honour of the particular host from whom I had just parted, withhold his name. It was Leonardo Vera.

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

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## LETTER XXII.

To J—— G——, Esq.

The Ants and their Pyramids—Approach to Assumption—Arrival  
there—Doctor Bargas.

*London, 1838.*

JOURNEYING onward to Assumption, we emerged one morning from a dark forest into a more open country, covered with palm-trees. I was much surprised to observe that mingling with these, and almost in equal numbers, rose thousands of conic masses of earth, to the height of eight and ten feet, and having a base of nearly five in diameter. My surprise increased when, on approaching these earthen pyramids, I found that they were not only tenanted by myriads of the small black ant, but were the colossal workmanship of that diminutive insect. Dismounting, to investigate the economy of so many vast and curious republics, I first endeavoured to ascertain the nature of the substance out of

which were constructed their Babylonish temples. They were obviously impervious to the heaviest rains, and could not be shaken by the strongest hurricane. No water appeared ever to have penetrated, no lightning ever to have scathed them. Yet they were masses of mere clay. I endeavoured, with my strong gaucho knife, to dig into one of them. I might as well have attempted to penetrate, with it, the flinty rock. My companion, Gomez, willing to surprise me, had not said a word; nor, in my eagerness for evidence from my own senses of the nature of so curious a phenomenon as that which presented itself to my view, had I asked him any questions. But the moment I attempted to dig into the impenetrable mass, he smiled, and said, "Señor Robertson, *és devalde*." "Believe me it is in vain." He then proceeded to tell me that those obelisks had been there from time immemorial, and that, for aught he or anybody else knew, they might be antediluvian. Though neither antiquary nor geologist, this story excited me the more closely to examine the structure of those venerable piles; and the more nearly I inspected them, the more was my wonder excited. On the

apex of the cone, there was an oval basin, from which diverged about thirty aqueducts, intended, evidently, to carry off all the water which might fall upon the pile. Between those conductors, from the base to the top of the structure, were innumerable perforations. There were pouring out of them, at one side, and into them at another, myriads of busy ants. Those which went in were all top-heavy with their unwieldy loads of leaves, grass, and grass-seed: those which issued were speeding in search of more of the same material, which they had, on a previous trip, deposited in the great and common emporium of the public wealth within the pile. No doubt as to the way, no intermission as to the labour, embarrassed a single member of the community. Sometimes a huge burthen of straw, or part of the leaf of a palm-tree, would fall from the back of its bearer; but in a moment it was replaced by half-a-dozen out-coming and unencumbered labourers. The sturdy porter then proceeded, as before, to his place of destination, staggering under the unwieldy heap which pressed upon his shoulders.

I next proceeded to trace the various paths

which led to and from the clay towers. These paths intersected and literally cut up the whole country. They were thronged with coming and going multitudes, in each individual of which the one predominant anxiety seemed to be—*haste*. But their excursions were not confined to soil. Every palm-tree was indented in half a dozen places with their footsteps, and both the fruit and the leaf of the stately plant (neither to be reached till you reach its top) were conspicuous elements of the traffic of the busy inhabitants of the pyramids below.

Azára has mentioned, in his work on Paraguay, that he encountered similar masses of earth raised by the ants, but so soft, that his horse having come unawares upon one of them (it must of course have been at night), he not only demolished the heap, but sank with his fore-legs into the abyss beneath it. He was travelling, however, along the coast, and upon marshy ground. I was a good way *from* the coast, and in the midst of a country, in which the clay is very remarkable for its hardness and consistency. The ants, instinctively knowing themselves to be subject to all the inclemencies of the weather, do also in-

stinctively select for their buildings the very hardest and most impervious parts of the clay in their immediate vicinity. Not only so; but, as wise master-builders, they interweave this clay in such manner with millions of bits of the bark of the palm-tree, as to constitute that durable and impenetrable mass, of which I have spoken. Let any one examine the consistency of the swallow's nest,—the curious, complicated, and elegant workmanship of the wren's;—and in reference at once to the habitation of the swallow, the wren, and the ant, he will be ready to exclaim with the Roman sage, "*Deus anima brutorum.*"

We came at last within four leagues of Assumption; and at this point of our journey we caught a glimpse of the majestic Paraguay, winding its silvery and expanded course through the land, which it at once enriches and adorns. Presently, we were shut out from the open country, and wended our way through a road, embanked on either side to the height of twelve feet. It was over-arched by the wood which met and twined its branches on one and the other bank of the cool and shaded pathway. Down from innumerable springs in the banks on each side



of the road gurgled the limpid water ; not a ray of the sun could penetrate our retreat ; and as the panting hart, after hot pursuit by the hounds, luxuriates in the stream, so we rejoiced in the deep and refreshing shade provided for us by the cool and sylvan passage through which we now bent our course to the capital. All the approaches (or passes, as they may more properly be styled) to Assumption are of this kind. They were originally made with a view to defence against the frequent and hostile inroads of the Indians ; and these defiles may be easily guarded by a few men with muskets in their hands, against any number of the aborigines. All danger from such inroads having now subsided, the approaches to the city serve only as the cool and grateful passages by which travellers enter it, or the rural inhabitants carry their loads of vegetables, fruit, and meat for the supply of the capital. Of such inhabitants we met or overtook hundreds, chiefly females. Some were on foot ; others bestrode asses ; some drove horses and mules with panniers before them ; and those of a higher station had a clumsy horse-cart, which by great exertion, and after many lingering pauses, they drove through the

deep ruts of sand, which constituted the one single pathway of foot-passenger, horseman, and vehicle. It was something more than picturesque to see the elegant, lightly-clothed female, with her full bust, roundly-turned arms, small hands, and small feet, short petticoat, embroidered tepôî, braided hair, and black eyes, pursuing her course of industry, either with a pitcher of water, a bundle of tobacco, a load of salt, or a parcel of the yucca-root on her head. Clothed in pure white, she glided, like a sylph, through the green foliage. It was a very fairy sort of scene.

After a ride through these shady lanes of twelve miles, I entered Assumption with all the enthusiasm of a man introduced, for the first time, into a country of such apparent Arcadian simplicity and happiness. The imagery of my mind was, no doubt, a little subdued after a month's acquaintance with the people. Mais ça ne veut rien dire. My first impression I shall never forget; nor can I believe but that the same glowing imagery arises always to our view, upon our first visit, in youthful days, to a new country. What romantic portraitures have we not had drawn even of the Esquimaux! Novelty and

contrast have charms which are quite irresistible, till they come to fade before the chilling influence of experience. She throws a phlegmatic coldness over our estimate of men and things; and, while she enlarges the sphere of our philosophy, she narrows the circle of our warmer affections, and more glowing associations.

I alighted, in Assumption, at the house of Dr. Bargas. He was a doctor in law, graduated at the University of Cordova; but having a patrimonial vineyard in Mendoza, which produced him five hundred barrels of wine a-year, he had come to Paraguay, for the purpose of selling them. Grating as is such a union of law and merchandise in one single person, to our association of ideas, there is nothing perceptibly anomalous in the junction, to the minds of the South Americans. The day on which we arrived was a holiday. Doctor Bargas had been to "palacio" in his court-dress. That was a light-yellow coat, with large mother-of-pearl buttons; green satin breeches with gold knee-buckles, and white silk stockings; an embroidered waistcoat, a cocked-hat, a bag-wig, and a very ancient rapier. His sumptuous head of hair was highly powdered

and pomatumed; and a quantity of cravat and shirt-frill, which would look truly monstrous in these days, obtruded itself upon observation, as demanding deference from all beholders.

The house of this Doctor Bargas consisted of three apartments. One was the store for his Mendoza wine, and for the tobacco and yerba, which he received in exchange for it. This served him at once for warehouse, dining-room, and drawing-room; and the door of it opened directly upon the street. Behind this repertorium was the doctor's bed-room, in which were to be seen a stretcher, horse-gear, sundry petacones, or hide-boxes of superior tobacco and cigars; a wash-hand basin on a chair; and a small window without either sash or glass. Clothes were strewed hither and thither; and boots and shoes in all directions. The wall was whitewashed, and the conspicuous rafters were black. The floor was of dusty brick, uncovered by either carpet or mat; some casks of Mendoza wine stood at one end; while a gorgeous hammock, a Spanish blunderbuss, and a brace of pistols, were ostentatiously displayed upon the walls. Behind this apartment, and "*en suite*," was a mud-walled and mud-floored kitchen, in which

by a fire kindled in the centre of it, a one-eyed black slave called Bopí (in Guarani, "the man of one eye") cooked the doctor's asado, made his olla, or seasoned with garlic his more dainty guisado, or stew.

The doctor received us in his court-dress, seated upon a petacon of tobacco. With unfeigned hospitality, and no little grace of demeanour, he welcomed me to Assumption. He tapped a barrel of his best Mendoza wine; set Bopí about cumbrous preparations for supper, and after eating, laughing, joking, hearing from the doctor all about the levee in Assumption, and of his intimacy with the Marquis of Torretagle in Lima, we retired; he to the stretcher, and I to the more enviable hammock in his bed-room. Jaded, rather, with the ride of the day, I fell asleep, as Dr. Bargas was descanting to me on the superiority of his native city, Mendoza, over Assumption; where he told me (and they were the last words I heard), I should find all the inhabitants puros barbaros (mere barbarians.)

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

## LETTER XXIII.

To J—— G——, Esq.

The Junta of Paraguay—My reception—More of Doctor Bargas  
—The City of Assumption—the Inhabitants.

*London, 1838.*

ON the morning after my arrival at Assumption, I went, accompanied by Dr. Bargas and Mr. Gomez, to present myself at the Government-House; to show my passports, give an account of my business, and make my obeisance to the men in power. The junta, which at this period ruled the province, was composed of three members, assisted by an assessor and a secretary. Of these, the president was Don Fulgencio Yegros, and the next in rank, Don Juan Pedro Cavallero. They had both been mainly instrumental in defeating Belgrano's army, and subsequently in deposing the Spanish Governor Velasco. They were

military men; and had, in consequence of the revolution, respectively risen from the rank of captain to that of general. They were men of little capacity or education, and untutored in the ways of the world, having never left their own native province. The third member of the junta was Don Fernando de la Mora, a lawyer of considerable attainments, some humour, and great urbanity of character. He had graduated at Cordova, and being the only *learned* member of the executive, regulated, with the aid of an assessor, Don Gregorio de la Cerda, all that was technically called, the "Despatch" of government. Its decrees were drawn up, and its documents attested by a secretary and notary public. The name of the one was Don Larios Galvan, and of the other, Don Jacinto Ruiz.

I mention their names, for they all fell victims, in one way or other, and at no distant period, to the ungovernable jealousy, and unrelenting cruelty of Francia. He had, shortly before my arrival, been secretary of the junta; but he had evinced a temper so petulant, dogged, and self-willed, that he provoked the long-suffering of Yegros and Cavallero to the expression of some

difference of opinion. Hereupon the incipient tyrant withdrew from the government ; made way for Mora and Galvan ; and was, at the time of my first visit to Assumption, brooding in his country-house, and in ominous discontent, over his loss of power. At the same time, he was planning, with all his influence, and by all the arts of intrigue, a speedy resumption of sway, at once undivided and uncontrolled.

I was admitted, then, after announcement by the sentinel, to the "Sala del Despacho" of the government, and hall of audience : for it was used as this, after business-hours.

It was a spacious and well-furnished apartment. Near the head of it, in great, and solemn, yet awkward state, sat, at a table covered with green cloth, the three members of the junta, attended by the secretary, assessor, and notary. A massive silver inkstand stood in the middle of the table ; and in a huge pile before the notary lay as well the processes and petitions, on which the junta had decreed that day, as the passports, licences, &c., which they had granted. I was received with cold and formal civility ; desired to be seated ; and after a few short questions,



was told I might retire. Doctor Bargas and Gomez were ordered to remain.

On being rejoined by them at the house of the former, I was informed that some awkward reports had reached the Government; of the substance of which reports, the assessor, and most influential man, Don Gregorio de la Cerda, had thus delivered himself:—"The Government is credibly informed that Mr. Robertson is followed by a very large property, and that it is his intention to monopolize the commerce of the province. This has created great jealousy and dissatisfaction among the native merchants; and some special fiscal regulations will be necessary to guard, in his case, against excesses of speculation, wiles, and fraud. Those regulations the Government will take care to provide. But it is also said that Mr. Robertson has on board of his ship, munitions of war, and that he has been making, as he travelled along, a map of the country, and other observations of a suspicious kind. These are things that must be closely looked into. It behoves us also to see that Mr. Robertson do nothing '*contra bonos mores*,' or subversive of religion. For the present, this

shall suffice. To you, Dr. Bargas, whose guest Mr. Robertson is, we look for the care of his person, and vigilant observation of his conduct ; while upon you, Señor Gomez, as supercargos, and chiefly concerned in bringing this foreigner into the province, we call for the rigid observance, under a security of two thousand dollars, of the regulations to which we shall subject you both."

This I thought a rather hostile reception. I had been subjected to no such restrictions or surveillance, either at Santa Fé, or Corrientes ; and I attributed those imposed upon me at Assumption to three causes ; first, to its very isolated and remote local, which, by diminishing its intercourse with other countries, augmented its distrust of foreigners : secondly, to the false and exaggerated reports circulated to my prejudice by jealous competitors ; and thirdly, to undefined fears in regard to smuggling, contraband, heresy, and monopoly. With the "*mens conscia recti*," however, in all these respects, I did not greatly quake under the junta's Interdictory Act. I felt assured that with the determination I had taken to respect their laws, and deal fairly and cour-

teously by all the inhabitants of the land, my actions would soon speak for themselves; and that, while they would hush private slander, they would also show the Government how groundless were their suspicions, and how vain their fears. The result in a very short time justified my anticipations.

I was now fairly located among Dr. Bargas' Mendoza wine-casks, serons of tobacco and yerba; and I was often fain to smile, as I witnessed the daily occupations of this learned, facetious, but rather inflated personage. In one corner of his wine-shop (for it was nothing else) stood his professional buféte, or lawyer's writing-table.

At this, he made out escritos, or law-petitions and papers, for his clients. You might hear him questioning and cross-questioning the simple and ignorant Paraguayans, till confounded by his learning, and stupified by his interrogatories, they left their cause in his own hands, a carte blanche which they were convinced he knew much better how to fill up than themselves. The next moment, and often with interruption to his writing and discussions, he bought tobacco from the small country farmers, in quantities of from

ten to one hundred pounds weight ; he trafficked in cigars with the Paraguay nymphs who manufactured them ; he sold Mendoza wine by the cask or by the gallon ; Mendoza figs by the arroba of twenty-five pounds ; and all this with his own hands, aided only in his manipulations by his man of all work, one-eyed Bopí. The doctor astonished little coteries of small fry (and no individual of them more than myself) with his discussions on politics, ethics, theology, civil and international law. His volubility was wonderful, his power of engrossing conversation astonishing. Mendoza, his native city, and the vineyard that had descended from father to son, for many generations, were exhaustless topics in the good doctor's discourse. The viceroys who had passed through Mendoza on their way to Lima were known to him every one ; and all the presidents of Chile, for the last hundred years, had taken up their abode, at the eastern base of the Andes, in the mansion of his fathers. He had been *Alcalde de primer voto*, or mayor, in the place of his nativity, during three different years ; and he was enrolled a member of the *audiencia*, or supreme court of Charcas. He gave me a com-

nission to purchase for his wife an English saddle, and said it must be a large one; for that my servidora (his wife, to wit) was "muy abundante de nalgas:" that is, "had a very large natural bustle." His four children were so many cherubim. The doctor always went to high mass at the cathedral, on Sunday, in the court-dress, which I have already described. I have frequently seen him, just as the bell was tolling its last chime, stoop down, in this court-dress, and serve a customer with a flask of wine drawn from the barrel last tapped in his store. One-eyed Bopí was dressed for high mass, too; and equipped in a white jacket, white trousers, white shirt, and small hat, walked at a solemn pace behind his master. This last did not consider that there was any necessity for shoes or stockings making part of Bopí's livery. In the evening, the doctor used to ride out, and the furniture of his horse was gorgeous as the attire of its master,—it was not gauchified (to coin a word), but quite courtly. His high-peaked saddle was covered with crimson velvet; the head-piece of the bridle was massively mounted with silver; he used large stirrups of the same metal; and

(save the mark!) large and heavy spurs, fastened over his thin shoes and silk stockings. It was the combination of the lawyer and the wine-merchant that enabled the doctor thus gorgeously to equip himself. From the produce of his vineyard he derived his wealth; and from Cordova he had brought his learning. The combination made him a most respected citizen. With Dr. Bargas and Gomez on my side, I was at no loss to get soon acquainted with all the inhabitants, great and small, of Assumption. A fortnight sufficed for that purpose; and as the ship, though now three months out on her voyage from Buenos Ayres, did not make her appearance, I had full scope and leisure for observation.

Of the city of Assumption I shall say very little. As a city, in our acceptance of the word, nothing can be said of it. In extent, architecture, convenience, or population, it does not rank with a fifth-rate town in England. It is true it has a cathedral; and when we think of Gloucester, Salisbury, even Chester and other cathedrals, the name sounds fine. But neither has Assumption any greater pretension to comparison with one of the towns mentioned, than has

its whitewashed paltry episcopal church, to comparison with any one of the noble piles which, under the designation of cathedrals, adorn this country. Its government-house, with the title of palace, is a mean, low, whitewashed, though extensive structure. Its largest buildings,—though anything but sumptuous,—are the convents; and so few good or commodious private houses are there, that it took me a month to find one large enough, at the highest rent ever paid there, three hundred and sixty dollars, or eighty pounds a-year, in which to accommodate the limited establishment I contemplated forming in this ancient capital. Of such houses there were certainly not more than half-a-dozen in the place. The rest were small, mean shops, with three or four apartments attached to them; while the great bulk of the dwellings were simple huts, constituting narrow lanes, or standing apart, surrounded by a few orange-trees. There could not be said to be more than one street in the town, and that was unpaved. The houses and shops on one side of this were defended from the sun and rain by a continuous corridor, something like the “rows” of Chester. Few of the

houses had azoteas, or flat roofs: they were mostly covered with tiles, and the doors of them generally opened, from the main apartment, without any intervening passage, upon the street. The situation of the city, however, is noble. It stands, in the form of an amphitheatre, on the banks of the majestic and placid river Paraguay. Many points of the town overlook that magnificent stream; and the romantic approaches to the capital which I have already described, together with the populous and cultivated environs, form a *tout ensemble* very pleasing,—I might almost say enchanting.

The inhabitants of Assumption and its suburbs amounted, at the time of which I write, to ten thousand. There were very few negroes, and not many mulattoes among them. The great bulk of the population was of a breed between Spaniards and Indians, so attenuated as regards any appearance of the latter caste, as to give the natives the air and appearance of descendants from Europeans. The men were generally well made and athletic; the women almost invariably pretty. The lightness and simplicity of their dress, and their personal attractions, still



more conspicuous than those of the females of Corrientes, together with a scrupulous attention to personal *propreté*, gave them all an interesting and attractive appearance. When I used to see them coming with their pitchers on their heads from the wells and springs, they always reminded me of so many Rebeccas.

The population may be classified as follows:—

1st, The members of the body politic, including military officers.

2ndly, The clergy, secular and regular.

3rdly, Lawyers and doctors, quacks and notaries.

4thly, Merchants.

5thly, Men of considerable estates.

6thly, Shopkeepers.

7thly, Petty landed proprietors, or yeomen in the vicinity of the town.

8thly, Free labourers (including the men who navigated the river, and worked in the yerbales).

9thly, Domesticated Indians.

These classes, in point of numbers, consist of the following proportions, taking an average of four to each family:—

	Families.
Classes 1st to 6th, inclusive . . .	300
7th . . . . .	500
8th . . . . .	1000
9th . . . . .	700

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In all 2500

or 10,000 inhabitants.

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

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## LETTER XXIV.

To J—— G——, Esq.

The Market Place of Assumption—Paî Mbatû—Arrival of the Ship—Precautions taken—Relaxation of these Precautions—Compadre La Cerda—Doña Juana Yaquibel.

*London, 1838.*

THE most curious, interesting, and novel scene presented to the eye of a stranger, in Assumption, is that of the market-place. It is held in the great square. Thither I repaired one morning, at five o'clock, to see "the gathering" of the people who supplied the city with its daily wants.

In, at every entrance from the country to the square, poured hundreds of females, dressed, without an exception, in white cotton. Some carried jars of honey on their heads, some bundles of the yucca-root, and some of raw cotton.

Others were laden with candles, sweet cakes, flowers, jars of spirits, pies and pastry, hot and cold, onions, red pepper, garlic, and Indian corn. Some had canisters of salt on their heads, and others large rolls of tobacco and bundles of cigars. Here was one driving an ass with panniers filled with poultry and eggs; and there another, bringing, by the same means, musk and water-melons, figs and oranges, for sale.

Many were laden with the sugar-cane, stripped of its outer rind and cut into short pieces, ready for suction. Then came the butchers' carts, with indifferent beef, badly killed, hung up in large pieces in the straw-thatched waggon, without any deference to cleanliness, and cut up with a total disregard of anatomical precision. There is no mutton eatable in Paraguay; and, with the exception of the yucca-root, the vegetables are few, and bad. Nobody, almost, partakes of them. After the groups mentioned, came the Payaguá Indians, hale and athletic, with their fish suspended from long paddles, carried on their shoulders. Others followed them with bundles of chala, or grass, brought from the Chaco for the horses of Assumption. When all these

various parties congregated in the market-place, to the number, I should conceive, of nearly five hundred, they distributed themselves and their productions in rows, leaving just space enough between, through which purchasers might pass. There were no stalls nor any chairs there. The articles were laid out upon mats on the ground, and their owners sat squat behind them. Of the whole mass of venders, *at least* three-fourths were women, and of the purchasers an equal proportion; so that the ground was covered with a dense mass of figures, clothed in white, chattering, higgling, disputing, and exclaiming, in Guaraní, till the air resounded with the buzz and clatter of the busy scene.

An extraordinary personage in that scene was a man of the name of Paï Mbatû, or Father Mbatû. He had taken priest's orders in early life; but whether stricken by love, and then smitten by conscience for allowing so unhal-  
lowed a passion to enter the bosom of a man dedicated to the temple,—as *some* say; or whether, according to others, Paï Mbatû, never having been a man of strong intellect, had it weakened by much learning; certain it is that the Paï,

without laying aside his habit, quitted the church, and lived a life of listless indifference and sloth. This was very well, as long as his patrimony lasted; but that was not exhaustless; and failed him. The good gentleman then overthrew the estimate of his friends as to his paucity of intellect, by the ingenuity with which he made provision for his wants. He attended the market-place regularly at break of day. For some time, through the respect entertained for his order, by many, and through the pity felt for him by others, he begged his way from one depôt of provision to another, and obtained a livelihood, if not honourable, at least gratis. But charity, like Paï Mbatû's patrimony, has a tendency to exhaust itself, at a ratio proportioned to the frequency with which it is laid under contribution; and that bounty which had hitherto been extended by the dealers in the market-place to the decayed clergyman, took the alarm on seeing him one day appear among them attended by a stout Tâpé Indian, bearing a large hide tipa, or circular receptacle, for provisions on his head. He had also a deep candle-box of the same material in his right hand.

Paí Mbatû had been content, hitherto, to stow away, in a wallet, carried by himself, the miscellaneous supplies for the larder, which he collected from his not unwilling contributors. But when they saw the formidable preparations made for the reception of more abundant stores, and inferred that the Tâpé Indian must be fed as well as his master, a general and sturdy resolution was come to, by the most influential people of both sexes in the market, to stop *in toto* the supplies to Paí Mbatû.

Up he went, as usual, and his domestic behind him, to his best patrons. Not a torta (or pie), not a candle, cigar, drop of honey, bit of sugarcane, or head of Indian corn could he get. Off he went to the butcher's cart: "Paysana," said he, "venga la carne." "Come, my friend, let me have my beef."

"The supplies are stopped," replied the butcher, and turned to serve his paying customers. From the aristocrats of the market Paí Mbatû appealed to the poor; and he found them still willing to contribute enough for that day's supply. But even *they* advised him to dismiss his servant; and one took leave to say that, though

she had contributed for many years to support the Paï, she never herself had a hired servant, and thought there was some impropriety in the pretension of beggars to become gentlemen. She supposed the next thing would be, that Paï Mbatû and his servant would come to market on horseback. The result was, that the decayed clergyman went home that day more scantily supplied than he had ever before been, but not with his mind made up to submit to a repetition of such treatment. Next morning he sallied forth, with his servant and receptacle for provisions as on the day before. He carried with him, in addition, a long cane, with a stout and well-sharpened nail driven into the lower extremity of it. Going up to several of the poorer classes, with whom he had hitherto dealt, he warned and admonished them against the mortal sin of refusing meat to any one, but especially to a man of his vocation. They trembled. He then made various signs of the cross, and exorcisms, with his cane. They withdrew their hands, which had before been stretched out to protect their provisions. The magic circle described by the stick became less and less, till



finding in the centre of it a torta to the liking of Paï Mbatû, down upon it pounced the cane, and the prize was straightway handed to the Tâpé behind. With due composure the valet cast it into the hide receptacle for his marketing. Paï Mbatû then proceeded to another spot selected by its occupant for the sale of her produce. Again the exhortation and warning commenced; the exorcisms, denunciations, and muttering followed; the magic stick swept its magic circle, and up at its end, to be handed to the Indian behind, came yucca-root, Indian corn, cigars, beef, candles, sugar-cane, and many other articles in the market-place. When a liquid was wanted, Paï Mbatû attached to the end of his cane a little earthen bottle, and left it to the market-woman to supply the cordial. In less than a month, the whole people of the market-place were content to submit to the spoliations of Paï Mbatû and his Indian servant, consoling themselves with the reflection that, if they thereby incurred a little temporal loss, they served better and more lasting interests. They thought, too, that, as there were five hundred who sold their wares in the shambles, and that, as it required only ten of

them to supply the daily wants of the Paí, the visitation could come upon them individually but twice a quarter; so what, after all, said they, is the provision of one day, twice a quarter, for a reverendo?

When I first visited the market-place, I was not only attracted by the conspicuous personage who has been the subject of this episode, but followed him. I observed and admired the composure with which the man and his servant filled their wallets, and the unhesitating acquiescence on the part of the simple people of Paraguay in his now apparently-established claims upon their bounty. It was only when I went home to Dr. Bargas, and related what I had seen, that he told me the story I have now related. I thought it a curious illustration of the ingenuity and address of the Paí, and of the good-nature and hospitality, increased by superstition, of the Paraguayans.

Not the least curious part of the story is, that Paí Mbatû and his man were not only *fed* by the contributions levied on the market-place, but clothed. They sold their superfluity of meat and drink, and with what they got for that, gowns

and cassocks and clerical hats were bought for the priest ; jackets, ponchos, shirts, and drawers for the Tâpé.

I have often wondered how such an attempt as the one detailed would be encouraged at the stalls of Covent-garden and Leadenhall-market. I question if a decayed curate or even bishop could get, and that for life, on the same easy terms, at either of those places, what the decayed Paï got in the market-place of Assumption.

But the ship arrived. The town was in a bustle. The Government issued its edicts. The whole cargo, contrary to general practice, was sent to the Government stores ; and, among other regulations, it was not only ordered that I should take out but a limited amount of property at a time, but that my supercargo, Gomez, should be sworn to deliver in a monthly account of my whole transactions.

I was forbidden to export specie, and to import more merchandise. Every package of that which I had brought was strictly examined ; and not before such examination was it allowed to be conveyed to my own house. Double guards

were put on board the vessel, and all the precautions taken which suspicion could suggest : but nothing was found wrong. My transactions became extensive, both with the native merchants and with the cultivators of produce. I prejudiced neither of them, but promoted the interests of both. The large amount of wealth (and for Assumption it *was* large) which I controlled and managed, brought, by degrees, the usual concomitants attendant upon the influence of property. I interfered not even remotely with politics ; I paid large duties to the state ; I became intimate with the assessor Cerda ; and intimate, too, with the individual members of Government ; I visited and was visited by them ; and at length I was told that, although, in compliance with the lingering jealousies of the people, it was necessary to keep the existing decrees against me as if in literal force, yet I might consider the most obnoxious of them as virtually abolished. In less than three months from the time of my arrival, I was not only a tolerated but a welcomed person among all classes. I dealt liberally with the rich, gave employment to the poor, and intermeddled not with the poli-

tical or religious creed of a single individual. When asked to express my opinion on those subjects, I declined doing so, on the plea of my not having the knowledge necessary to enable me to discuss the one, nor the learning to authorise my entering upon polemical controversy on the other. Little doubt will be entertained of the truth of my assertion, when I state that at the time of which I write I was not twenty years of age.

Thus all went very smoothly; everything I did prospered; and in about four months after my arrival in Assumption, I felt myself in a great degree identified with its inhabitants. I had free access to high and low; and where I could not win affection, I endeavoured, by conciliation, to disarm enmity. The assessor, I may say, the ruler of the Government, Don Gregorio de la Cerda, had become my right-hand man; nor was I unwilling to march under the direction of one who not only did as he pleased in affairs of state, but who was the padrino (or godfather) of the children of every family of consideration in the place. All bowed to him, courted him,

sent him presents; and his sway over the country at large was not more remarkable than the willing control under which he kept all persons of any note. Compadre Cerda's orders, and even his expressed volitions, became irreversible. We know little in this country of the absolute and almost sacred control of a Roman Catholic godfather over the families to which he stands in this relation; and still less do we know of the strict obligation under which he holds himself, through good report and evil report, to promote the interest of the families, and especially of the godchildren, toward whom he contracts his paramount obligations at the baptismal font.

Don Gregorio introduced me one day to the great-grandmother of one of his comadres or gossips. The old lady was eighty-four years of age; rich, hale, healthy, vigorous, and active; and she was in the habit of riding to Assumption from her country-house and back again on a gallant palfrey three times a-week. Though a wrinkled skeleton, and brown as an Egyptian mummy, she was erect; she did not totter at all; and her utterance, even in Spanish, was

clear, unbroken, and distinct. Her name (and it was a very old family name) was Doña Juana Ysquibel.

I had long been looking out for a country-house; but could find none exactly to please me. Compadre La Cerda knew this. He had determined I should occupy part of Doña Juana's; and a simple hint from the all-powerful godfather was sufficient to ensure a ready compliance with his desire. To me he never said a word of his project; but one day, I received from the old lady herself, a note written in quite a legible character to this effect:—

“I understand from my compadre La Cerda” (you will perceive that though he was only the godfather of her great-grand-daughter's family, she called him her's), “that you want a house in the country. Though mine is none of the best” (it was the *very* best), “I shall expect you to take up your abode in it, whenever you like, after to-morrow. I will take no excuse, at least till you can better suit yourself. I shall hold three apartments, and the necessary attendance at your service.

(Signed) “JUANA DE YSQUIBEL.”

I could scarcely credit the testimony of my own eyes, as I read the note. I had never seen the lady above twice; and in doubt as to whether it proceeded from her, I carried it to compadre La Cerda. He laughed at my incredulity; gave me to understand that it was all his doing; and that unless I complied, I should put an affront upon the octogenarian lady that she would never recover. I went a few days afterwards, and took possession of my spacious apartments at Doña Juana's house in Campo Grande. In rude fashion, but with overflowing hospitality was I received by her, and waited upon by her numerous slaves. The house stood embosomed in an orange-grove; it was surrounded by a wooded country richly contrasted with small intervening valleys and clear streams. Game of every kind abounded within a few hundred yards of the house. Horses were at my service, and servants too; Doña Juana, having once received me within her gate, thought her honour compromised, her reputation for hospitality at stake, unless everything that could contribute to my comfort and happiness were as complete as she



could make it; and it was all on the simple recommendation of her great-grand-daughter's compadre, La Cerda.

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

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## LETTER XXV.

To J—— G——, Esq.

Doña Juana Ysquibel—A Serio-Comic Affair—Preparations for  
a Fête-Champêtre.

*London, 1838.*

DOÑA JUANA YSQUIBEL was one of the most extraordinary women I ever saw. In Paraguay, women fade generally into old age at forty. Yet Doña Juana was eighty-four; and though necessarily shrivelled and grey, she still preserved a vivacity of eye, a hilarity of disposition, and an activity, both of body and of mind, which exemplified the truth of the saying, that "there is no general rule without an exception."

I was entertained by her "*en Prince*." There is in the Spanish character, especially as it was then enlarged by South American abundance, such a magnificent conception of the word "hos-

pitality," that I allowed it, with proper demonstrations of reciprocal courtesy and favours on my part, to proceed, on that of Doña Juana, to a great extent. In the first place, her whole household establishment, servants, horses, viands, produce of her estate, were at my disposal. Then, if I accidentally admired any thing she had,—a favourite palfrey,—rich filagree,—choice specimens of tambouring,—preserved sweetmeats,—or a pair of handsome mules,—they were instantly made over to me in a way to render their reception unavoidable. A gold snuff-box, because I said it was very pretty, was brought by a slave one morning into my room; and a ring of brilliants because I one day happened to look at it, was laid on my table, with a note which made its acceptance imperious. Nothing was cooked in the house but what it was known I liked; and though I endeavoured in as many ways as possible, at once to compensate for this onerous civility, and to show that I felt it to be rather overwhelming, yet I found all my efforts to diminish it ineffectual.

I was, therefore, determined to quit my overhospitable abode, when a circumstance occurred

which, however incredible, is most true; and it changed, and placed on a better footing, my subsequent intercourse with this singular woman.

I was fond of the plaintive airs sung by the Paraguayans, and accompanied by the guitar. Doña Juana knew this; and to my great surprise, when I came home one evening from town, I found her, under the direction of a guitarista, or master of the guitar, endeavouring, with her cracked voice, to sing a *triste*, and with her lank, brown, and wrinkled fingers, to manage an accompaniment to it on the guitar. How could I do otherwise, on beholding such a spectacle of second childhood, than, in defiance even of the lady's sensitive nature, break out into a smile, expressive of derision. "For God's sake," said I, "Doña Juana, how can you, fourteen years after the time when, according to the laws of humanity, you should have been in the grave, either make yourself such a butt for the ridicule of your enemies, or such an object for the compassion of your friends?"

The exclamation, I confess, even though addressed to a woman of eighty-four, was not a

gallant one: for where *age* is concerned, what woman can bear a taunt?

That Doña Juana, in this respect, had all the weakness of her sex, was very soon apparent. Down she flung the guitar; she ordered the singing-master unceremoniously out of the house; the servants she sent out of the room; and then, with a fierceness of aspect, of which I little thought her capable, she astounded me by the following address:—"Señor Don Juan: little did I expect such an insult from the man whom I have loved:" and on the latter word she laid no ordinary emphasis. "Yes," (she continued) "*loved*. I was prepared, I am *still* prepared to offer you my hand and my estate. If I was learning to sing, and to play the guitar, for whose sake was it but yours? What have I studied,—what have I thought of,—for whom have I lived during the last three months but for *you*? and is *this* the return which I meet with?"

Here the old lady exhibited a curious combination of the ridiculous, the pathetic, and the passionate, as, melting into tears, and yet sobbing with indignation, she gave vent to her feelings.

The scene was one of striking novelty, not unalloyed with alarm on my part, on account of the poor old woman. I therefore left the room ; sent her female servants to her ; told them their mistress was seriously ill ; and after hearing that all alarm was over, I went to bed, not knowing whether most to pity, or to smile at, the tender passion which a youth of twenty had excited in the susceptible bosom of a lady of eighty-four. I hope I shall stand exonerated from any charge of vanity in relating the pathetic tale. I do it simply to exemplify the well-known aberrations of that most ardent yet capricious of all the deities, Cupid. There is no age beyond the reach of his shaft. The octogenarian and the youthful swain are alike his victims ; and his pranks are generally the most frolicsome when all things external, —age, habits, decrepitude,—have combined to render the idea of his access to the heart incredible and absurd.

At Doña Juana's request, I went next morning to her chamber ; and whether it be that a night's rest has no small effect in soothing the feelings, or that my reasonings with her, accompanied by a reluctant protest that I must

leave her house, unless she would give me a formal promise no longer to make love, or to play the guitar, I know not : but certain it is, that she was reconciled to my remaining, under a solemn league and covenant on her part, that I should neither receive any more presents, nor hear anything more of love or music.

The day of St. John was at hand. It is a very grand and festive day in all Catholic countries ; and it was not only the day of Doña Juana's saint, but of mine. She proposed, as a proof of her complete forgiveness of my rejection of her suit, to celebrate the day at her house in Ytapúa or Campo Grande, by a fête champêtre. "Thus," she said, "we shall at once honour our saint, and show the sincerity of our mutual forgiveness. I confess I have been very foolish in this matter : 'pero eso se acabó'—'that is all over.' "

I cordially assented to the celebration of the proposed fête, on the express condition that it was to be at my expense. This knotty point being also settled, Doña Juana and I proceeded to Assumption to invite the guests, she on a prancing palfrey, with two handsome female mulatto grooms ; and I by her side, on a not despi-

cable bay gelding, with a black man-servant behind me.

There was no such thing known, in Paraguay, as the ceremony of issuing cards of invitation a month before the day appointed for a fête, nor indeed of issuing cards of invitation at all. The simple practice was for the parties, at whose houses it was to be held, to go round, personally, three days before its celebration, to their various friends, and bid them to the supper, the dinner, the wedding, or the dance, as the case might be. I was now not only acquainted, but intimate, with high and low, rich and poor, in Assumption. Though there was a distinction there, and even a marked one, of classes and grades, there was none of that refinement, known in Europe, by which a man of a certain rank loses caste by visiting in a lower. This arose, of course, out of the different constitution of the society in Paraguay from that of more advanced countries. The whole structure of human intercourse was less complicated in the isolated regions of the departed Jesuits than in the more populous kingdoms of civilized Europe. On the comparative advantages to be derived from the



simplicity of a Paraguay life, and from the refinement of a European one, I think with Sir Roger de Coverley, that much might be said on both sides: but eschewing the discussion of the subject, I shall leave you to philosophize on it, according to your humour, from the facts, which I have already related, and have yet to detail illustrative of the nature of Paraguay society.

Doña Juana and I arrived at Assumption, in time to go through, in one day, the ceremony of paying a personal visit to every one of the guests, of which we had made out the list, that were to be invited to celebrate the festival of St. John at Ytapúa. Of course the members of the government were first asked; and none of them refused to come. Then Don Gregorio de la Cerda, the almost universal compadre of Paraguay, and the other officers of rank and note followed; the post-master general; collector of the customs; clergy, both secular and regular; quarteleros, or officers of the barracks; General Velasco, the old Spanish governor; a few farmers; a few merchants; a few shopkeepers; all consented to come; and were, as we say, in accepting the invitation, "most happy."

Things being thus preliminarily arranged for the grand fête, Doña Juana and myself set in earnest about making the necessary preparations for giving it éclat. In these we were aided by a great many families in Assumption : and the account of what passed I shall next proceed to give you.

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

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## LETTER XXVI.

To J—— G——, Esq.

FÊTE AT YTAPUÁ.

Celebration of the day of St. John—His Shrine and Image—Arrival of the Company; and first—of the Friars—of the Members of Government—of Don Gregorio de la Cerda and his Comadres—of the Officers of the Quartel, or barracks—of miscellaneous groups—and of General Velasco, the late Spanish Governor—Commencement of the mirth—Paraguay peasantry and the guitar—The festivities—Breaking up of the party.

*London, 1838.*

THE natal day of St. John dawned auspicious on Ytapúa. The most sumptuous and abundant arrangements were made by Doña Juana, as well in honour of her saint, as for the good cheer of her guests. These amounted to about two hundred, and embraced all grades, from the members of the government, down to the shop-keepers of Assumption. After what I have told you of Dr. Bargas and his wine-stores, you will see that there was no degradation attached to

the profession of vending by retail in Paraguay. Tout au contraire: your tendero, or shopkeeper, being generally the more substantial man of the two, took precedence of your country-gentleman; who, little acquainted either with the value of land, or the dignity conferred in some countries, by the possession of it, looked up with respect to the shopkeeper's bags of dollars, and down with a sigh of regret upon his own less prosperous condition. "Un pobre estanciero"—"un pobre hacendado"—"a poor breeder of cattle on my own estate"—"a poor cultivator of my own lands"—were expressions as common as those of "Un comerciante poderoso"—"un tendero rico"—"an affluent merchant"—"a rich shopkeeper." For my own part, carrying my European associations always with me, I never could look but with respect on the patriarchal descendants of the first conquerors of Paraguay, who had inherited their lands from their ancestors, and cultivated them from generation to generation, with rude, but successful simplicity.

But to return to Ytapúa. Doña Juana's first care was to decorate with uncommon splendour a large image of St. John the Evangelist, which, in

a costly crystal box, she preserved as the chief ornament of her principal sala or drawing-room. He was painted anew, and re-gilt; he had a black velvet robe purchased for him, and trimmed with deep gold lace. Hovering over him was a cherub, and with more historical propriety than I should have expected from a Roman Catholic artist in Paraguay, there were thrown up behind the saint some artificial rocks, moss, and trees, meant to represent the Isle of Patmos, in which he wrote the Apocalypse. Every friend of Doña Juana had lent some part of her jewellery for the decoration of the holy man. Rings sparkled on his fingers; collars hung around his neck; a tiara graced his venerable brow. The lacings of his sandals were studded with pearls; a precious girdle bound his slender waist; and six large wax candles were lighted up at the shrine. There, embosomed in fragrant evergreens,—the orange,—the lime,—the acacia,—stood the favourite saint, destined to receive the first homage of every guest that should arrive.

The orange-groves on either side of the house were festooned with variegated lamps, ready to be lit. The tables were laid out by the best

confectioners in Assumption: the old governor's cooks were hired for the occasion: and every one was requested to bring as many of his own domestics as he could.

Preliminaries being thus duly and in order arranged, Doña Juana and I took our seats upon the lawn, and there awaited the approach of our guests, with all the self-complacency consequent upon a conscientious conviction that no pains had been spared to provide, either for their comfort or amusement.

No sooner had the sun begun to lay his slanting beams athwart the umbrageous outlets, which conduct from Assumption to the adjacent country, than horses, mules, carts, carriages, vehicles of every description were put in motion for Ytapúa.

First of all, came prancing up the lawn to Doña Juana's house, a goodly company of Franciscan friars, preceded by the band of their monastery, and mounted on horses, sleek and fat, and richly caparisoned. Each friar carried his umbrella; and though clothing of sackcloth and absence of linen and stockings, bespoke his humility; yet the plump and portly appearance of all, very much in keeping with the condition of their

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horses, told a latent tale of ease and good living, which could scarcely escape the notice of the most charitable observer. In saying that this venerable body came attended by the band of the convent, it may be necessary to explain that in Assumption, every convent had its band for the celebration, in the first instance, of high mass; but in the second, also, for the purpose of being hired out, with the charitable view of promoting festive hilarity. Have you ever been in one of our old-fashioned country churches in England, where the clodpole performers of the orchestra lord it at once over priest and congregation? Such a band as you have heard there will convey to you an exact idea of those, which, from the time of the conquest of Paraguay, had edified, in Assumption, the parishioners, and formed, on excursions such as that to Ytapúa, part of the retinue of the priests. The Franciscan friars, to the number of eight, alighted from their horses, and after them, the Dominicans, Mercedarios, and Recoletanos. They all kneeled and took off their hats to St. John: Jubiláte was played by the band: and then followed refreshments and congratulations, just as you might suppose them

to take place in civilized and even polished society in England.

There was no stabling for the horses of such a company as we expected ; and therefore the whole successive troops that bore their masters were let into a large potrero, or paddock, for the night.

Scarcely had we done the honours to our monastic friends, when, in a lumbering carriage of nearly a century back—the old government state-carriage of Assumption—appeared the wives of the members of the junta. They were escorted by their husbands, mounted on gallant chargers, and dressed in ball-room costume. Their heavy sabres dangled by their sides ; yet they were clothed in short knee-breeches and silk stockings ; while their horses, trained for such special occasions to dance (and so called baylarines, or dancers), moved on by the side of the carriage that dragged its ponderous weight through ruts of sand often eight and ten inches deep. The carriage having set down, and the gentlemen dismounted on the lawn, the horses were sent, as before, to the paddock, and the vehicle to the back part of the house.

This party was succeeded by Don Gregorio de



la Cerda, and twelve or fourteen of his comadres. The latter were in caravans with awnings over them, and mattresses under the ladies, to break the shock of the constant jolting of the clumsy waggons. They were drawn each by four oxen, and moved at the rate of two miles an hour. Then six out of the twelve comadres had infants with them. Don Gregorio (their guardian angel) was mounted on a superb white horse, caparisoned after the highest style of Spanish luxury and antiquity; and he had one favourite godson before, and another behind him. He was dressed in a light drab coat, with large mother-of-pearl buttons, an embroidered waistcoat, silk stockings, and golden knee and shoe-buckles; of course he wore a very high cocked-hat; and an ample scarlet capote, or cloak, was thrown gracefully over his shoulders. No man was ever so rich in godchildren as Don Gregorio; and therefore no man I ever saw in America was so potent. If a man wishes to become, in that country, a first-rate character, let him lay himself out to become a general godfather.

After Don Gregorio, came groups of officers in full-dress, escorting each, on horseback, his

favourite Dulcinea. In many cases the lady rode on a pillion behind her dragoon ; and not a few palfreys were mounted by two Paraguayan sylphs, escorted by their favourite paysitos, or young country beaux. In poured the tenderos, or shopkeepers, in all the finery of upstart wealth and vulgarity ; in came Dr. Bargas, powdered, and pomatumed, and frizzled from top to toe. In came the merchants, full of " wise saws and modern instances ;" and finally, in came the late gentleman-like, modest, and dignified Spanish governor, General Velasco. He was attended simply by his butler and valet-de-chambre, (for the faithful man served him in both capacities) and a groom.

All his power was gone ; his honours were laid in the dust : there were his rivals revelling in those attributes and distinctions which but a few months ago were exclusively his own ; and yet not a frown, not a symptom of jealousy or mortified pride clouded his brow. Good man ! How little he deserved the awful fate which at a subsequent period overtook him during Francia's indiscriminating and unrelenting reign of terror.

By the time the whole party was assembled, the shades of evening were beginning to throw their sombre hues over the scene of the lawn. The sun set in great splendour, and the moon rose in equal brightness. The firmament was studded with stars: at a given signal the whole house was lit; the orange-grove appeared in a blaze; up struck the bands of the convents; and, some upon the lawn, some in the saloons, but all somewhere, commenced a simultaneous dance. The brilliancy of the light on the spot, and the chastened transparency of the country and atmosphere in the distance, reminded me of the night gambols of fairies, in haunts not yet encroached upon by human beings. What added greatly to the romantic simplicity of the scene was, that, ever and anon, little groups of Paraguayan peasantry, uninvited, except by the report they had heard of the rejoicings that were to take place at Doña Juana's, came through the valley in different directions. They were escorted by one or two guitarreros (players on the guitar), who accompanied themselves on that instrument to some plaintive triste, or national ballad. As they emerged from behind the copses, or came

out from the surrounding dark woods, in their white dresses, they looked in the distance like inhabitants of another world ; and as their simple and harmonious music came undulating from different quarters upon the breeze, one might have fancied it a choral contribution of the shepherds of Arcadia.

Very different were the revels within, and immediately around the dwelling of Doña Juana. Some were dancing on the lawn ; some in the saloons ; some were cracking jokes amid peals of laughter loud and long ; here was a party of friars busy at malilla (or whist), and there another rejoicing in the pleasures of the tempting wines and viands which were spread out for all. A few of the more bold of the holy fathers were winding through the mazes of the dance. They were distinguishable chiefly by their bulk from their fair partners, both being clad in petticoats. Then there was Don Gregorio de la Cerda, who thought his reputation at stake unless he kept the mothers of his godchildren (his comadres) in a state of perpetual self-complacency, or irresistible laughter. Don Fernando de la Mora, a member of the junta, danced with the gout, and

like Andromache, when parting from Hector, laughed and cried at the same moment.

Here was a personage, named Bedoya, nearly seven feet high, and with latitudinal amplitude much more than proportioned to his longitudinal dimensions. Still he was dancing with no small glee, and perspiring with no little profusion. The members of the government threw off all restraint, and danced, drank, and smoked cigars, just like the rest of their subjects. Up got Doña Juana, in her eighty-fourth year, and danced a sarandig, or heel-dance; swains with their nymphs crowded the orange-grove, and each there wooed the lass he loved. The servants collected in groups round the fires lit in the groves for their cooking purposes; every little singing company, as it came up, was accommodated with room, and entertained with good cheer; defiance seemed to be bidden to the ills of life; and, uncouth as was the music of the church choirs, and vociferous as was the din of the guests, yet the whole scene had an air thrown over it of abundance, simplicity, and cordial hilarity, which I shall not soon forget.

Both the light and the music of the revels

must have reached Dr. Francia's cottage; and at this very time he was planning those schemes which have since been carried into execution, and have at once hushed the sound of hilarity, and extinguished the light of liberty.

The old Spanish Governor Velasco observed to me with remarkable and foreboding emphasis: " Ah, Mr. Robertson, I am afraid this is the last scene of festivity we shall ever see in Paraguay."

At length the day broke in upon our revelries. The ladies began to look very wan, and the candles and lamps to grow very dim. The lungs of the musicians were exhausted; some of the friars had lost their money at cards, and many of the guests their wits over their wine. Mothers looked after their daughters: servants after their carriages and carts. Many husbands were, by their wives, caught napping, but all were obliged to obey orders. They ran into the paddock to catch their horses, and afterwards busied themselves in saddling them. Warm coffee and chocolate were handed round; servants bustled, and equipages started; troops of hallooing horsemen took the road; off went the friars—and off with

them the musicians. By nine o'clock in the morning, there was nothing left to behold but the vestiges of the gaiety of the night past.

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

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## LETTER XXVII.

To J — G—, Esq.

Scenery of Ytapúa—My first Interview with Francia—His Cottage—His Manners and Attainments—His Political Intrigues.

*London, 1838.*

THE situation of the house of Doña Juana Ysquierbel in Ytapúa was absolutely beautiful; nor was the country around it less so. You might see the magnificent woods of rich and varied verdure; here the open plain, and there the dense coppice; gurgling springs and brooks refreshing the soil; orange-groves, sugar-canes, and Indian corn, showing forth the industry of man; the lowly cottage bespeaking his contentment and rural simplicity; and occasionally the larger dwelling bearing evidence that he is by nature an aspiring being.

On one of those lovely evenings in Paraguay, after the south-west wind has both cleared and



cooled the air, I was drawn, in my pursuit of game, into a peaceful valley, not far from Doña Juana's, and remarkable for its combination of all the striking features of the scenery of the country. Suddenly I came upon a neat and unpretending cottage. Up rose a partridge; I fired, and the bird came to the ground. A voice from behind called out, "Buen tiro"—"a good shot." I turned round, and beheld a gentleman of about fifty years of age, dressed in a suit of black, with a large scarlet capote, or cloak, thrown over his shoulders. He had a maté-cup in one hand, a cigar in the other; and a little urchin of a negro, with his arms crossed, was in attendance by the gentleman's side. The stranger's countenance was dark, and his black eyes were very penetrating, while his jet hair, combed back from a bold forehead, and hanging in natural ringlets over his shoulders, gave him a dignified and striking air. He wore on his shoes large golden buckles, and at the knees of his breeches the same.

I apologized for having fired so close to his house; but, with great kindness and urbanity, the owner of it assured me there was no occasion

for my offering the least excuse; and that his house and grounds were at my service, whenever I chose to amuse myself with my gun in that direction. In exercise of the primitive and simple hospitality common in the country, I was invited to sit down under the corridor, and to take a cigar and maté. A celestial globe, a large telescope, and a theodolite were under the little portico; and I immediately inferred that the personage before me was no other than Doctor Francia.

The apparatus accorded with what I had heard of his reputation for a knowledge of the occult sciences; but I was not long left to conjecture on this point; for he presently informed me, in answer to my appeal whether I had not the honour of addressing Dr. Francia, that he was that person.

“And I presume,” he continued, “that you are the Cavallero Ingles, who resides at Doña Juana Ysquibel’s?”

✓ I replied that I was; when he said he had intended to call on me; but that such was the state of politics in Paraguay, and particularly as far as himself was concerned, that he found it necessary to live in great seclusion. He could no other-

wise, he added, avoid the having of sinister interpretations put upon his most trifling actions.

Passing from this subject, he was pleased that I should know what were his occupations. He introduced me to his library, in a confined room, with a very small window, and that so shaded by the roof of the corridor, as to admit the least portion of light necessary for study. The library was arranged on three rows of shelves, extending across the room, and might have consisted of three hundred volumes. There were many ponderous books on law; a few on the inductive sciences; some in French and some in Latin upon subjects of general literature, with Euclid's Elements, and some school-boy treatises on algebra. On a large table were heaps of law-papers and processes. Several folios bound in vellum were outspread upon it; a lighted candle (though placed there solely with a view to light cigars) lent its feeble aid to illumine the room; while a maté-cup and inkstand, both of silver, stood on another part of the table. There was neither carpet nor mat on the brick-floor; and the chairs were of such ancient fashion, size, and weight, that it required a considerable effort to move

them from one spot to another. They were covered with old tanned ox-leather, indented with curious hieroglyphics, and, from long use, very brown and glossy. Their straight backs were conspicuously higher than the head of the party seated upon them, and to sit in a reclining posture was out of the question. The ground of the apartment was scattered over with thousands of pieces of torn letters, and untorn envelopes. An earthen jar for water and a jug stood upon a coarse wooden tripod in one corner, and the Doctor's horse-furniture in another. Slippers, boots, and shoes lay scattered about, and the room altogether had an air of confusion, darkness, and absence of comfort, the more striking that the cottage, though lowly, was perfectly neat outside, and so romantically placed, as to have all the air of an abode at once of beauty and of peace.

Not a trace of the sanguinary propensities, or of the ungovernable caprice, by the exercise of which he afterwards attained so bad a celebrity, were observable in the manner, or deducible from the conversation, of Francia, at the time of which I am now speaking. Quite the reverse. His de-

meanour was subdued and unostentatious ; his principles, as far as they could be ascertained from his own declarations, just, though not very exalted ; and his legal integrity, as an advocate, had never been disputed. *Vanity* seemed to me to be the leading feature of his character ; and though there was a latent sternness and almost continual severity in his countenance, yet, when relaxed into a smile, they only made, by contrast, an impression the more winning upon those with whom he conversed.

He was pleased it should be known that he understood French, a very uncommon branch of knowledge in Paraguay. He made some display of his acquaintance with Voltaire, Rousseau, and Volney, and he concurred entirely in the theory of the latter. But he was most of all proud to be known as an algebraist and astronomer. He was, it is true, but a very short way inducted into these sciences. It was sufficient, however, in Paraguay, to verify the Spanish proverb, that “*En tierra de los ciegos, el tuerto es rey*” —“in the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king.” In Paraguay, an acquaintance with French, Euclid’s Elements, equations, the mode

of handling a theodolite, or with books prohibited by the Vatican, was, in point of knowledge, so much the exception to the general rule, that the man who had it (and Francia was the only one who could make the proud boast) was deemed something between a magician and a demigod.

Night drew on apace, and I bade adieu to my loquacious, as well as gracious, host. I little fancied, then, either that he was to figure as he has since done, or that an intercourse begun with so much civility, was to end with so much injustice.

At this time, Francia, though living in such apparent seclusion, it was afterwards known, had been busy in intrigue against the Government.

He received secret visits from most of the substantial farmers and landed proprietors of the country ; he encouraged the aspirations of men who had hitherto never dreamt of obtaining power ; he was all meekness and condescension to the *lower*, all hauteur to the *higher* classes of society. His plan was to imbue the country-people with a feeling that they were misgoverned by a few ignorant men devoid of merit ; and to insinuate if *he* should once come back to power

how different it would be. He represented to them that the object of the revolution had been to overthrow the aristocratic pretensions of Old Spain ; whereas it was now apparent that these pretensions were only superseded by others more odious, because they were set up by men whom they knew to be no more than their equals, some of them their inferiors. " Yet was it not plain," he would ask, " that they were daily violating the promises and professions which they had made ? Who is Don Fulgencio Yegros ?" (then president of the junta), he would say. " An ignorant Gaucho. What better is Don Juan Pedro Cavallero ? Nothing. And yet both are generals, vested with supreme authority and insulting you with the display of an idle parade, which would be ludicrous if it were not contemptible !"

" What, then ! has the necessity ceased for active operations, which yet these men have not the energy to undertake ; or for positive reforms, which they have neither the skill to conceive, nor the ability to execute ?"

In this way did Francia pour the poison of disaffection and discontent into the ears of his countrymen, who at once admired his patriotism,

respected his integrity, and venerated his wisdom. It was thus, at the very time of my first unpremeditated visit to him, that he was laying the foundation of that awful power which put into his hand, at no distant period, the sceptre of iron, with which he has beaten down the people of Paraguay, till they have licked the dust under the soles of his feet, and in not a few instances, have bathed that dust with their innocent blood.

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

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## LETTER XXVIII.

To J—— G——, Esq.

VOYAGE, AGUAS ABAXO, OR DOWN THE STREAM.

Patronage of Don Gregorio—Effects of it—Preparations for the Voyage—Payaguá Indians—The Sailing from Assumption—Mode of Navigating—Getting aground—The Crew—The Marinos—Preparations to meet them—Enthusiasm of the Men—Precautions taken—We escape, and arrive at Santa Fé.

*London, 1838.*

I WAS now not only initiated into Paraguay society, but intimate with many, and acquainted with almost all of its members. Don Gregorio de la Cerda, the assessor of the government, and yet more the assessor of the numerous private families, to the children of which he was godfather, became my constant friend and companion. His principle was (and he was only one of a large class who entertained the same), that wherever he had a compadre or a friend, it was his bounden duty to do him some service. The principle of Don Gregorio was too honourable, and he was

too punctilious, to commit a breach of it in any case.

“Señor Don Juan,” he said to me one day, after the fête of Ytapúa, “es preciso que de algun modo v. me permita servirle.”—“Mr. Robertson, I insist upon it that you put me in the way of doing something to serve you.”

Now there was no one in Paraguay that could so well serve me as Don Gregorio. He was lord paramount there, and directed all the operations of the government.

“Well, Señor Don Gregorio,” I replied, “you know the port of Paraguay is now closed against the egress of both persons and property. You know, too, that I have a great deal of the latter locked up in unprofitable stagnation here. Besides, I desire very much to return for a season to Buenos Ayres. Now, if you will obtain permission for me to take away both my person and property in one of the many ships lying empty and inactive in the Rivera, you will do me a very essential favour.” The best of compadres and friends instantly replied, “Por hecho”—“consider the matter settled.” “There are,” he continued, “some difficulties in the way. There

will be great jealousy on the part of all the merchants, on account of your being authorized to break the embargo. The Spanish marines, you know, are in the river, and making prizes of all vessels which sail from independent ports; and Vattel lays it down as a principle of international law, that no neutral can be allowed to carry his property from one belligerent port to another, unless the ship in which it is be under the flag of his own nation, and be manned by at least one-third of subjects belonging to it. But never mind, we will find a way of smoothing these difficulties, provided you have really made up your mind to run the risk, which you know is imminent, of capture."

"That," I replied, "is entirely my affair; and my mind is quite made up on the subject."

Don Gregorio was one of those active and fidgety spirits that, having once undertaken a business, give themselves no rest, day or night, till it is accomplished. He instantly sat down and dictated to an amanuensis the petition to the government, embracing all the points of my request; and of the fate of which petition he knew himself to be sole arbiter. He explained and

nullified, in the present instance, the objections of Vattel; he made out a very ingenious case of hardship for me; and he called upon the government, as it valued the friendship of Great Britain, to grant the reasonable request of the only British subject then in Paraguay. There were a number of technical formalities to be gone through, in the way of taking the opinions and informes (or dicta) of the various lawyers and men in office. The cabildo, or court of aldermen, were to give their informes; the judge of commerce, and the director of customs were to give theirs. The juez de alzada, or judge of appeal, was to give his opinion, and the fiscal his. Every one of these honourable and learned gentlemen were compadres of Don Gregorio; and the idea of one compadre's opinion being against another's, especially as Don Gregorio was the government assessor, was not to be entertained. Every one of them, therefore, set down exactly what their compadre dictated. Within eight days from the time of presenting my petition, all was granted. Whether things be so managed in this country, I cannot tell; but favouritism is so prevailing a principle in the heart of man, as to be almost a

synonymous term for friendship ; and wherever this exists, in combination with the power to render it available, it is rather envy and disappointment, than the pretended love of justice and fair dealing, that enter their caveats and objections to favours so conferred.

Every obstacle to my voyage, “aguas abaxo,” or down the stream, being now removed, I set about my preparations for it with all alacrity ; and as a voyage “aguas abaxo,” especially with an enemy in the river, does not come within the scope of any idea we have of ordinary navigation, I shall give you a short account of my novel and rather adventurous undertaking.

In the first place, I hired a ship large enough to carry fifteen hundred bales, or serons, of the maté, or Paraguay tea. The manner of loading vessels in Paraguay for a voyage down the river is this:—the hold is filled with one-half of the cargo ; the other half is stowed upon deck. For this purpose, a house\* is made of wicker-work, by tying, with thongs of hide, strong bamboo-canes, which rest upon upright posts, raised about six or

\* It is called a *troxa*, or trough.

seven feet above the gunwales of the vessel. The bales of maté being here deposited, are carefully covered over with a roof of hides tightly sewed together, and forming on either side a slope like that of the roof of a house, in order to admit of the water's running off. Round the whole a strong cord of hide-thong is run, to prevent those who walk on this elevated roof from falling into the water.

The commander of my ship was a native of Old Spain of the name of Borda, and therefore not considered the best person to be employed in the conducting of an expedition, of which his own countrymen were the only enemies to be feared. But I took him on this very account. He had once been engaged, while on a smuggling expedition, in a rencontre with them; and having received, as well an indelible wound in the face, as earned the reputation of being an inveterate enemy never to be spared or forgiven, I knew that in any case of emergency he would fight with the desperation of a man who had no hope but in his own prowess, I had a crew of fifteen athletic Paraguayans, under the control of an old Paraguayan pilot, cunning, sagacious,

and full of foresight. But the most conspicuous and interesting part of my equipment was a beautiful canoe of thirty feet long, scooped out of the trunk of the lapacho-tree. It was one single and magnificent hollow piece of timber; and when seated upon the water, had all the grace and lightness of a Cleopatra's barge. In this canoe stood eight Payaguá Indians, tall, muscular, erect, and uncontrolled in their manly motions, by aught but a girdle round their waists. They were under the command of a cacique, who sat at once as steersman and pilot; and as they simultaneously dipped their paddles, seven feet long, into the water, alternately bending and rising at each stroke, they looked like so many athletes, overcoming every obstacle before them, and pushing their skiff with irresistible rapidity over the waters. It was a magnificent sight to see them gliding down the current at the rate of fifteen miles an hour; and bearing up against it at the rate of ten. Every muscle was discernible in powerful operation; every feature of their faces were lit up with the alacrity of home-felt enjoyment on their own proper element. They were each armed with a bow, which I could never

bend; and rude arrows tipped with iron, and dipped in poison, six feet long. Each man had, moreover, a long rod; and to the end of it was attached a net, in which he deposited his game, whether fish or fowl. They were noble fellows, and more than realized to me all I had ever read or heard of the freedom and grace of action, and of the muscular powers of the swarthy Indian. What I most admired was their complete subordination to their chief or cacique. He and I were seated under a little awning in the stern of the canoe. He scarcely ever spoke. His look,—the motion of his hand,—the vociferation of “ha! ha! alà! alà!” were sufficient to procure an instant compliance with the most secret desires of his heart. Did a dorado or large gold-fish come in sight? the pilot was the first to announce its approach to the crew; and in an instant an arrow was let fly attached by a cord to the shooter’s hand. By this cord the golden prize was drawn into the canoe. In the same way, when we landed, every beast of the forest, and every bird of the wood at which they took aim became the prey of those dexterous bowmen. Often have I seen a pheasant perched among the thick boughs of a tree



struck to the heart by one of their arrows ; and often was the javalie, or wild boar of the woods, laid prostrate by their unerring aim. I have sailed in English barges ; I have been rowed by the crack crews of the cutters of a man of war ; but never did I see such a crew as that of Payaguás, and their cacique, by which I was now paddled in my splendid canoe down the placid waters of the Paraguay.

My object in taking this canoe was to proceed ahead of the vessel, and, looking out for the enemy, to bring back word if we discovered him, in order that the necessary preparations might be made to fight, or the necessary precautions taken to avoid him. The moorings of the ship were at length loosed from Assumption, and she glided gallantly down the stream. Her gunwales were nearly in it ; but the great troxa, or house upon the deck, made her look like the ark floating upon the waters. The tall Paraguayans walked to and fro upon the roof of it. Two of them on each side, with canes twenty feet long, kept sounding the depths of the river, as the vessel made rapid way upon it, while the *vaqueano* or pilot, all caution and attention, scanned

with his keen and practical eye that part of the current in which to sail, or the indications of some shifting sand-bank to be avoided. I and my Payaguá Indians, in our canoe, shot like lightning ahead of the bark, and winding round one of the beautiful headlands of the river, were soon out of sight. Every nook was explored, every cottage on the banks of the river was called at, in order to look for the *marinos*,\* or endeavour to get news of them. We reached Neëm-bucú; and my friend the Comandante assured me all was so far safe. On the fourth day we passed Corrientes. Still we heard of nothing to impede our voyage. Generally speaking, the canoe was twenty miles ahead of the ship, and every afternoon we returned to her with the news of "All's well." Never was my admiration more excited than on beholding the indefatigable ex-

\* The *marinos*, thus shortly called by the South Americans, were the sailors who navigated the ships and vessels of Spain in the River Plate. By their predatory excursions, and landings on the most uninhabited parts of the Paraná, they had excited great alarm among the few and isolated peasants and inhabitants of the small villages on its banks. They had also made prizes of many of the river craft, and had, on one occasion, proceeded so far as to bombard the town of Buenos Ayres. They were, at the period of which I now write, complete masters of the river.

ertions, as well of the Payaguá Indians, as of the Paraguay sailors. They toiled morning and evening, under a nearly vertical sun, with unconquerable assiduity and perseverance. One evening as I was paddled up the stream to meet the vessel, after our out-look for the day, I was surprised, and a little alarmed, not to find her at the expected spot. "Oh," said my Payaguá Palinurus, in very bad Spanish, of which he spoke scarcely a word, "no nada—no nada—barradura no mas; yo sè lugar; ha! ha!—alà! alà!" Hereupon his Indian subjects so plied their paddles, that the canoe bade defiance to the current; and trees, islands, promontories, vanished behind us, as every ten minutes we opened up to view some new and beautiful scenery.

By a good deal of explanation given by the Payaguá cacique, in a garbled jargon of Spanish and Guaraní, I understood that our vessel must have got aground, and that he knew where. One hour's rowing more convinced me how unerring had been his calculations; for on rounding a headland, we perceived our polacca fast upon a bank, and the sailors busy rowing to and fro

between her and an adjacent island, on which they were landing the troxa part of the cargo.

Hereupon the whole of my eight Payaguás shouted forth a wild and discordant yell; redoubled their exertions; and in a quarter of an hour we were all on board of the ship. She had been now so far lightened, as to be swinging off the bank; and in little more than a couple of hours, she was free of it, with the whole cargo of her house replaced, and the ship herself tied to a couple of trees for the night.

These barraduras, or striking on sand-banks, as you sail down the Paraná, are frequent, even under the most skilful pilotage; because the banks are continually shifting with the periodical floodings of the river. But the sand is so soft, the vessels are so strong, and the facility of lightening them by removal to an island, or to the banks of the river, of the deck part of the cargo, is so great, that no inconvenience, beyond that of a little delay, ever occurs in consequence of them. The exertions required on such occasions, however, from the men, are immense. I know not in the present case whether the efforts

of the crew of the ship, or of the Payaguás of the canoe were greatest: yet here were they all now seated in contentment and hilarity around a blazing fire which they had kindled on the banks of the river; they were eating, without even salt to it, charque, or strips of beef dried in the sun; water was their beverage; the ground was their seat, and was to be their bed; the sky was their canopy; and the exertions of the morrow were to be greater, perhaps, than those of to-day. Yet the Payaguás were laughing: the Paraguayans were singing and playing the guitar; and ever and anon, some joke went round, or some story was told, that elicited from the whole party unqualified applause, or not less unqualified ridicule. Now, thought I, as in musing contemplation of the group I stood upon the roof of my floating house, what scope is here for the exercise of sober-minded and impartial philosophy! Here is wit, appreciated by the untutored listeners; dulness detected by the naked Payaguá; here is music, breaking forth from the uninstructed voice, and from under the untaught fingers of the inhabitant of the torrid zone: laughter and merriment here hold their

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gambols; labour has doffed her habiliments of toil, and clothed herself in the garments of ease and relaxation; the fare is hard, but hunger herself stands handmaid to make it savoury; and in lieu of the juice of the grape, the simple partakers of the repast are content to moisten it with the waters of the Paraná. Here, as night comes on, each man lays himself down around the embers of the fire, with leaves for his bed, for a covering his poncho; sleep, unbidden, folds him in her arms; labour and sobriety keep aloof the phantom of night-mare, and the dream of horror: and the dawn of day finds him at once refreshed, and ready with renewed alacrity, for renewed exertion.

Whether there be not here as goodly a portion of happiness as we have any right to expect, or chance of realizing, on this side of the grave; or whether our happiness be rendered more complete by all the pomp, pride, and circumstance of civilized society, I leave it to deeper thinkers, and to those fonder of controversy than myself, to decide.

Onward we moved the next day, the vessel sweeping down the stream, and the eight sturdy

Payaguás, under their cacique, with myself in the canoe, shooting a-head of her like an arrow from a bow. Not a word did we hear of the marinos, till, on the 9th day after our leaving Assumption, as the canoe approached the Baxada, the quick eye of the cacique descried two vessels at anchor in the midst of the stream. In an instant, upon a war-whoop call to his Indian crew, they crouched down in the canoe, and with their heads scarcely above her sides, turned the prow against the stream, and paddled up the river in breathless silence. They kept close under the precipitous barranca, or cliff, that they might not be observed; and the Vaqueano cacique began forthwith to explain to me, that he had seen two Spanish marine vessels at anchor in the middle of the river, directly between the Baxada and Santa Fé. I asked him how he knew they were marinos; and all he could answer was, "I know,—I see guns."

Upon reflection I was sure he must be right: for had they not been enemy's vessels, they would have been in the port of the Baxada itself, and not at anchor in the stream.

The moment we were out of sight, up rose the

Payaguás to their natural height; "And now," said the Vaqueano, "what are we to do?" My mind had been made up from the beginning, what, under such a contingency, we were to do: it was either to fight the enemy, or, by stratagem, to elude him. I ordered the cacique to make all possible haste back to the ship; and with such rapidity were my orders fulfilled, that in a couple of hours we descried her, with all sail set, coming at the rate of ten miles an hour, down the stream. We instantly hoisted the signal agreed upon for her to stop, when she immediately hauled her wind, stood across the river, and in ten minutes was among the brushwood and rushes of the great chaco. We soon reached the spot in the canoe. I ordered all the men to come upon the roof of the house, and I thus addressed Borda, the vaqueano (or pilot), and his Paraguayan crew:—"My friends, we are within four hours' sail of two Spanish vessels of war, which will assuredly intercept us in our attempt to reach Santa Fé. Now, are you prepared in case of necessity, to fight them? or will you discharge your cargo, and return with ignominy and loss to Paraguay? Will you, Borda, whom your



countrymen have so maltreated, lose an opportunity of revenging yourself? And will you, Paraguayans, who have declared your independence of a power you despise, shun conflict with it, when the moment for action arrives? Will you go back and tell your relations and friends, that those marinos, whom you have ever held in derision, so frightened you, that the moment you discovered the masts of their ships, you sought refuge in flight? How will your countrymen believe you, and if they do, where will you afterwards hide your heads?"

With one accord, commander, pilot and men, shouted aloud that they would fight, and do whatever I commanded them. Secure thus, of the Paraguay crew, I next addressed myself, through an interpreter, to the Payaguá cacique and *his* men—the gallant crew of my little skiff. "Payaguás," said I, "you are the descendants of a noble race, which the Spaniards have sought to exterminate. Here is an opportunity for you to show of what stuff you are made. Will you join heart and hand with your brothers of Paraguay, and myself, and let us go down upon those invaders of your soil, and challenge them to

answer at once for past injuries and present arrogance?" "We will—we will," replied the cacique, "Cataitig we will;" "of a certainty we will;" and I was at no loss to find, from the warlike and daring attitudes and gesticulations of his crew, that they were knit together in purpose, as one man.

I never forgot, all this while, that my enterprise was one, not of warfare, but of peace; and while I stood prepared for the predicament of being obliged to fight, I yet hoped to evade a contingency so little in accordance with the object of my voyage.

Of this, however, I said nothing to my men, being convinced that my best plan was to screw their courage up to an anticipation of the worst that could happen. To work went all hands. Some furbished up the old muskets, and others whetted the rusty pikes and cutlasses. Our cartridges were laid out in order in a large box; and the Payaguás put all their bows and arrows in order. A dozen hides were forthwith soaked, and cut up into strips, so as to enable the crew to make a boarding-netting, which to the height of five feet, was strongly fixed to a vast number of

thick boughs, cut, for this purpose, out of the wood. When this netting was drawn up, and the men were ranged on either side of the hide roof of our ship,—there the brave Paraguayans with their halberds, swords, and muskets, and here the gigantic Payaguás, with their bows, arrows, and spears—Borda looking more fierce from the slash he had received in the face from his countrymen, and the two pilots incessantly animating their respective crews,—I felt that sort of anticipation of success, which animates the spirit to enterprise, and cheers it in the execution. The new moon laid her feeble light upon the waters. Orders were given to weigh, and to the men to be as still as the night. Down we glided towards the enemy, keeping as much as possible in-shore, on the Santa Fé side of the river. The upper sails were all clewed down, and not a hush was to be heard on board. After sailing for about four hours, the sound of the enemy's "eight bells" (that is, twelve o'clock) came undulating upon the waters; and in ten minutes more, we saw the two vessels looming in the distance.

Orders were given to all the men to lie down on the roof of the troxa, and to the pilot to keep

the vessel close in by the trees. We were now within a quarter of a mile of the marinos ; and the next five minutes were to determine our fate. Everything was prepared to resist attack ; every precaution taken to avoid it.

We did avoid it : the marinos were asleep ; while we, by adoption of the measure, prudent, whether it be taken on the voyage of life, or on that of the great waters,—of keeping *a good look-out ahead*,—sailed quietly and safely past them, into the riacho of Santa Fé. Ere the morning dawned, we had attained that port of safety.

All were surprised at our escape, and all congratulated me upon it. Candioti said jocosely he should propose me as commandant of the naval force, which consisted of a gun-boat, that the inhabitants did not quite like to risk in an engagement with the enemy. In about a fortnight, however, the enemy retired, to join a considerable fleet of vessels which they had lower down the river, in front of the town of Rosario. All my men were rewarded with double wages ; each with an individual present ; and they wended their way back to Paraguay in the canoes, of which I made them a free donation. A little

fortune was made by the Paraguay tea, for which I had to thank my friend Don Gregorio ; and I set off on horseback for Buenos Ayres, which I reached on the fourteenth day from that of our having left Assumption. The voyage from that port to Santa Fé, not counting stoppages and detentions unconnected with the navigation, had been made in nine days ; while from Santa Fé to Assumption the voyage is one of two months. Thus far for the difference between sailing *with* the current, and *against* it,

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

END OF VOL. I.

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